

THE MAN WHO COUNTS THE TV MURDERS / FICTION BY CYNTHIA OZICK

The Atlantic Monthly

MAY 1997

MY RACE PROBLEM—AND OURS

A

consideration

of touchy

matters—

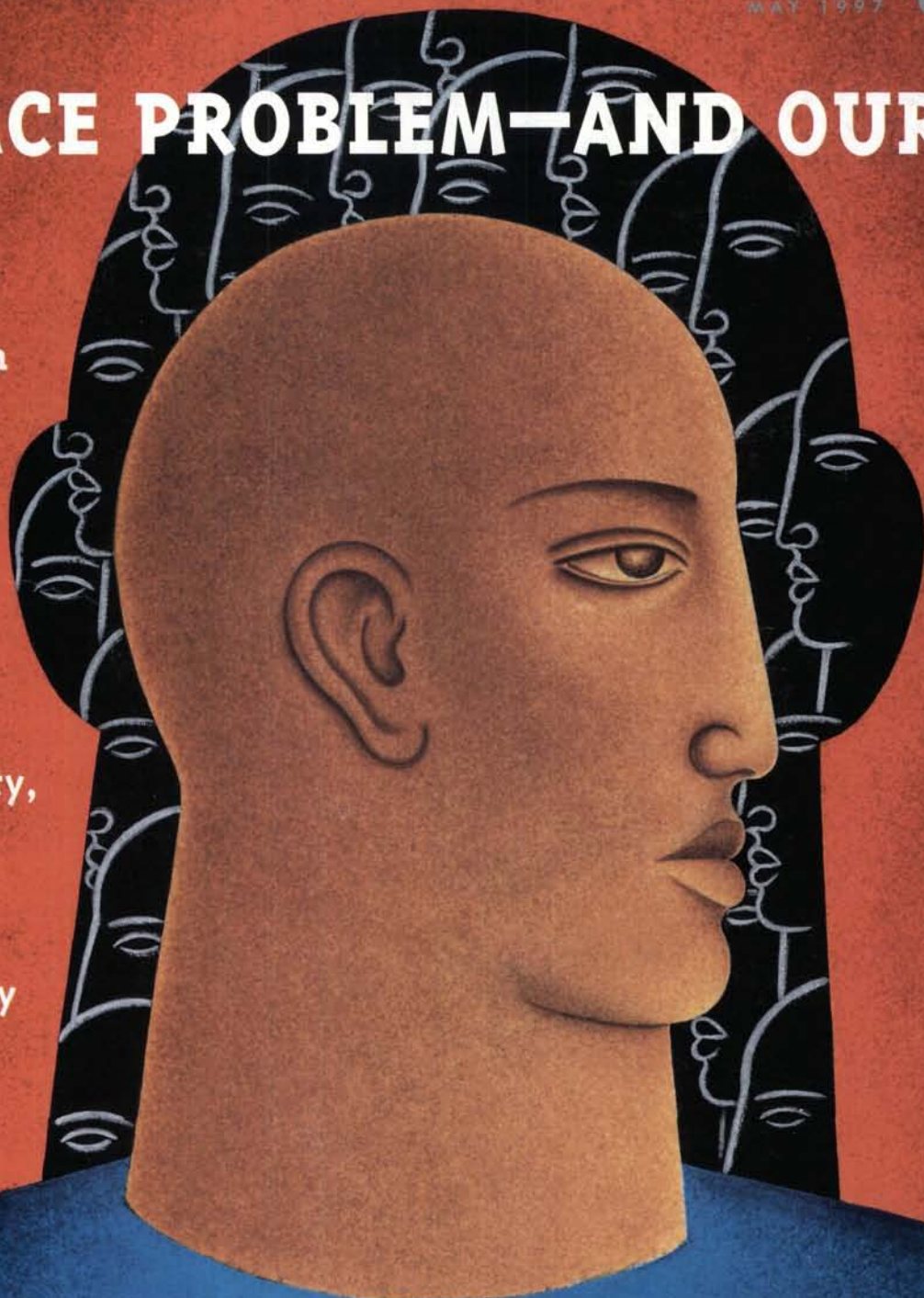
racial pride,

racial solidarity,

and racial

loyalty—rarely

discussed



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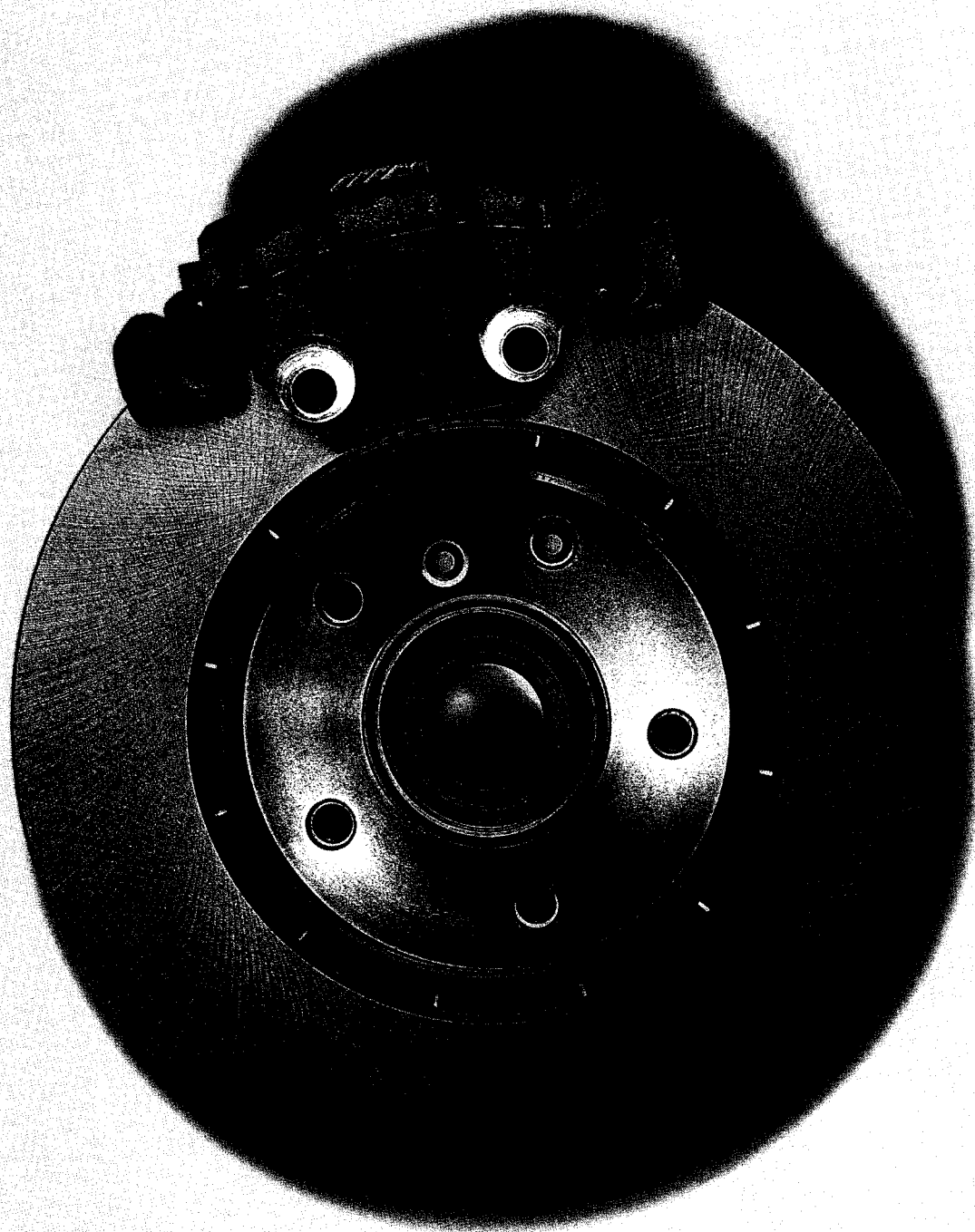
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A prominent black intellectual asks: Should American blacks embrace any measure of racial unity, racial loyalty, racial solidarity, racial kinship—as many black leaders explicitly urge or implicitly countenance? No, they should not, he argues, for reasons that are at once practical and philosophical, and that remind us of the enduring ideals of American society.

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The statistical litany about violence on television is by now as familiar and ritualized as . . . well, as violence on television. George Gerbner—brooding emigré, visionary academic, aging zealot—has probably spent more time than anyone else in America evaluating the effect of television on individuals and society. Now he has launched a crusade.

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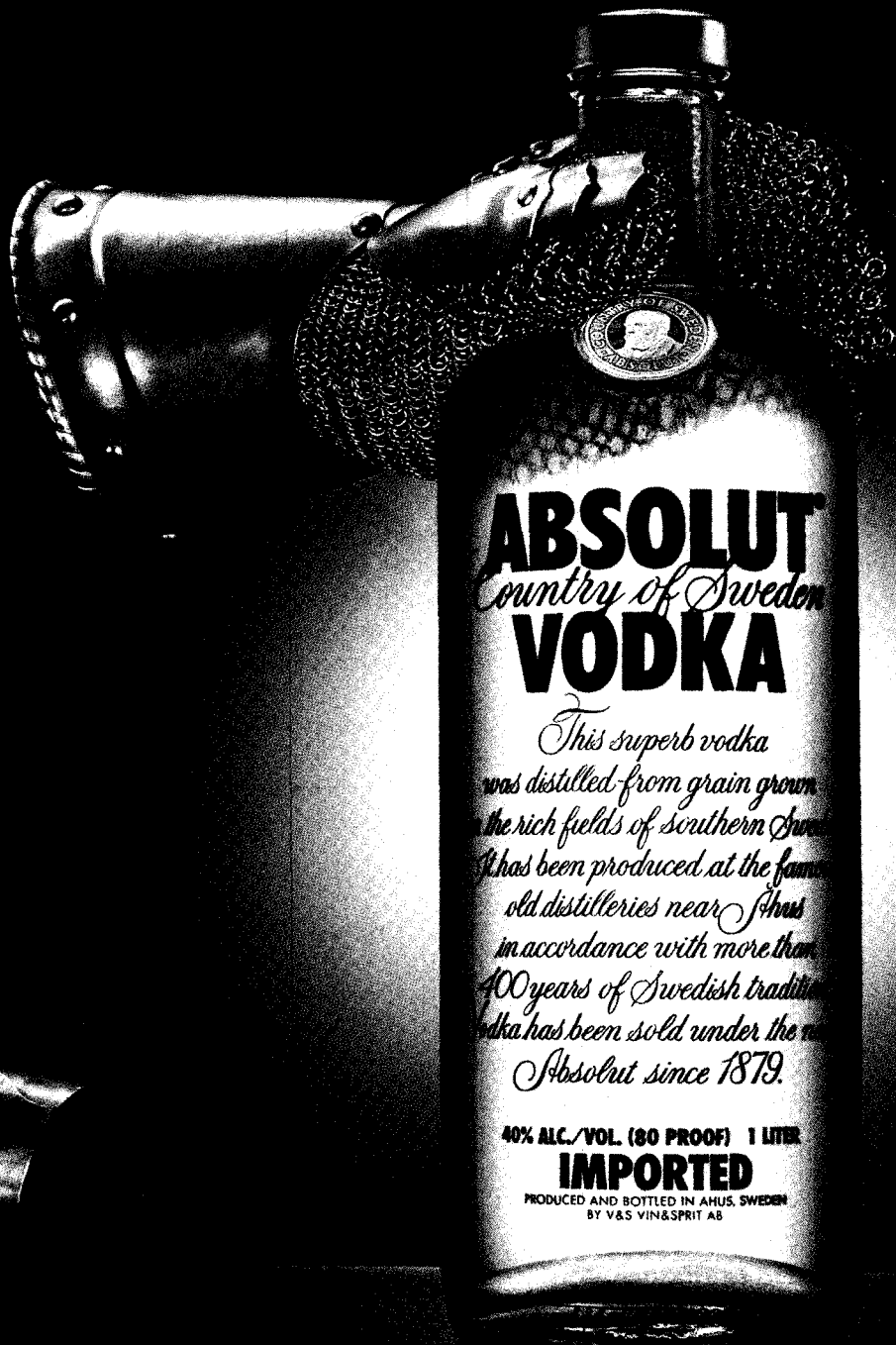
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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

IN this month's cover story Randall Kennedy manages the difficult feat of saying something new about race. "My Race Problem—and Ours" gives voice to seldom-asked questions: Should African-Americans feel "racial pride"? Should "blood ties" to their race be accorded a special status? Should "racial loyalty"? Kennedy, a professor at Harvard Law School, sorts through these questions with measured candor—and, in the end, with considerable dismay at the standard answers.

A native of Washington, D.C. (see his review of *Dream City: Race, Power, and the Decline of Washington, D.C.* in the October, 1994, *Atlantic Monthly*), Kennedy attended St. Albans School, Princeton University, Balliol College of Oxford University (where he was a Rhodes Scholar), and Yale Law School. As a young lawyer Kennedy clerked for the Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. A trustee of Princeton, he is also a member of the editorial boards of *Dissent*, *The Nation*, and *The American Prospect*.

Kennedy, the author of many articles in legal journals and general-interest magazines, has just published his first book, *Race, Crime, and the Law*. "It is a book," he explained during

a recent conversation, "that deals with the major issues at the intersection of race relations and the law. It relates the history of racial conflict in the administration of criminal justice and explores a variety of volatile questions: Should police officers be allowed to take race into account in calculating the suspiciousness of people? Should judges take race into account in changing the venue of trials? Should defendants be entitled to a jury with at least some people who share their racial background? Is it true, as many allege, that racial bias is pervasive in the prosecution of crimes, especially drug offenses, and the infliction of punishments, especially the death penalty? To the extent that these claims are true, what remedies are proper? How can one tell whether an attorney is making a racial appeal to jurors, and if such an appeal is being made, how should the legal system respond? One purpose of the book is to demystify the jargon of judges and lawyers. After all, the law is something that concerns and affects everyone."

Randall Kennedy lives near Boston, with his wife, Yvedt Matory, a cancer surgeon at the Brigham and Women's Hospital, and his son, Henry William Kennedy. —THE EDITORS



HARVARD LAW ART COLLECTION

CONTRIBUTORS

Colin Beavan ("Underwater Daredevils") is a writer who lives in New York.

Peter Davison ("Off the Maine Coast") is the poetry editor of *The Atlantic*. His books include *The Fading Smile* (1994), a memoir, and *The Poems of Peter Davison 1957–1995*, which was just published in paperback.

Mark Derr ("So Long to Bad Dogs") is a poet and a journalist. His book *Dog's Best Friend: Annals of the Dog-Human Relationship* will be published next month.

Sandra Dionisi (cover art) is an illustrator who lives in Toronto. Her work has appeared in numerous publications in North America and Europe. She is currently completing the cover art for the Canadian edition of the Robertson Davies Library.

John D. Donahue ("The Disunited States") is an associate professor at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at

Harvard University. His essay in this issue will appear in somewhat different form in his book *Disunited States*, to be published next month by Basic Books.

Mark Doty ("The Embrace") is a poet whose new collection, *Sweet Machine*, will be published next year.

Randall Kennedy ("My Race Problem—and Ours") is a professor at Harvard Law School.

David Lawday ("Hidden Colors") is the chief correspondent of *The Economist* in Germany, based in Berlin.

Cynthia Ozick ("Puttermesser in Paradise") is a novelist and essayist. She is the author of many books, including *Fame & Folly* (1996). Her short story in this issue is taken from her novel *The Puttermesser Papers*, to be published next month by Alfred A. Knopf.

Katha Pollitt ("Abortion in American History") is a poet and an essayist and the author of *Reasonable Creatures: Essays on Women and Feminism* (1994).

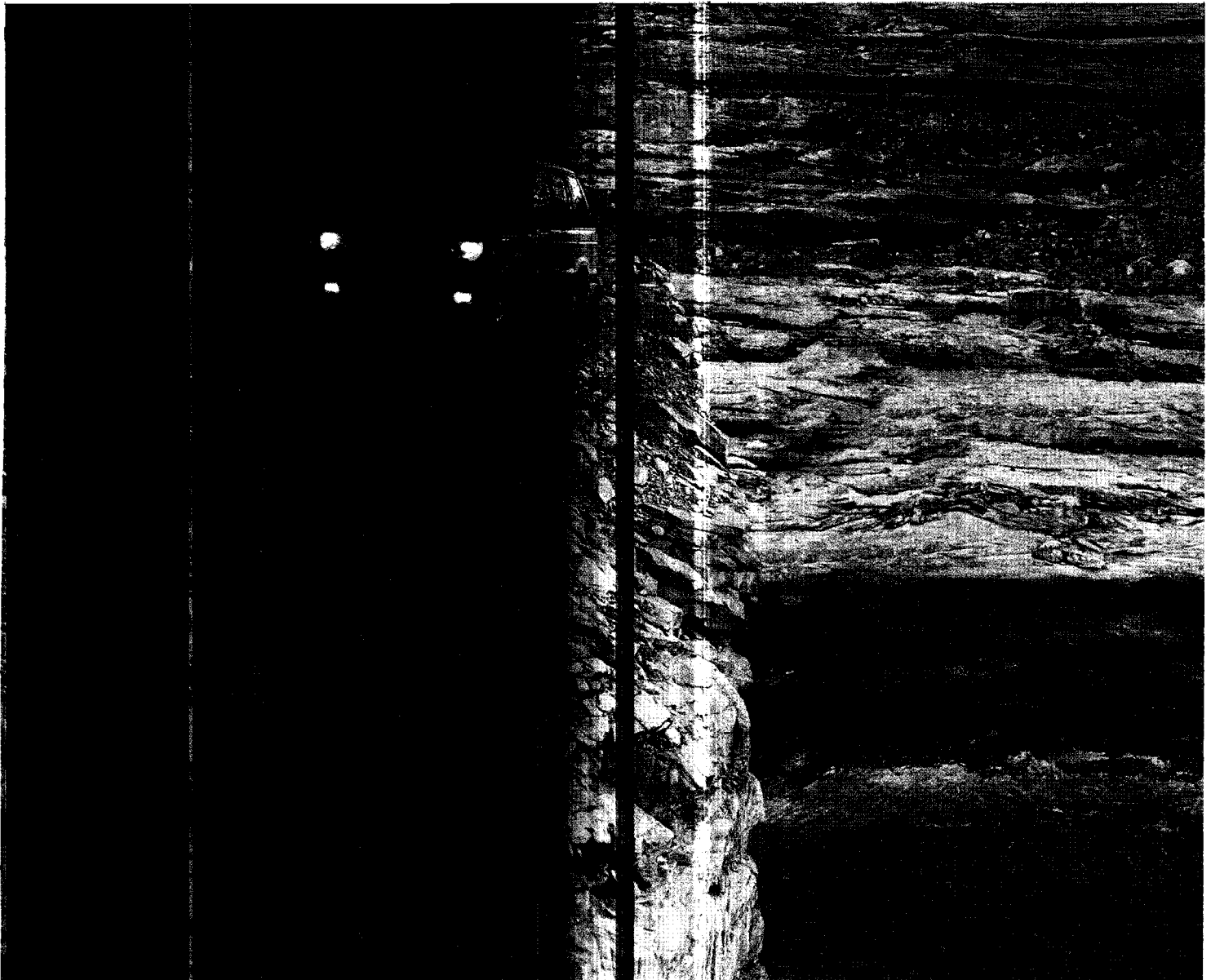
David Solway ("My Daughter at Chess") is a poet whose next book, *Random Walks: Essays in Elective Criticism*, will be published this fall.

Scott Stossel ("The Man Who Counts the Killings") was a staff editor at *The Atlantic* before becoming the associate editor of *The American Prospect*.

Wisława Szymborska ("A Word on Statistics") won the 1996 Nobel Prize for literature. Her most recent book in English is *View With a Grain of Sand* (1995). She lives in Krakow, Poland. Joanna Trzeciak, the translator of Szymborska's poem in this issue, is currently at work on a collection of translations of Szymborska's poetry.

Martin P. Wattenberg ("The Crisis of Electoral Politics") is a professor of political science at the University of California at Irvine. He is the author of *The Decline of American Political Parties, 1952–1994* (1996).

Michael J. Weiss ("At Last Count") is the author of *Latitudes & Attitudes* (1994), a book about consumption patterns.



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LETTERS

Capitalist Threat

As a longtime reader of *The Atlantic Monthly*, I was startled to read George Soros's "The Capitalist Threat" (February *Atlantic*). Soros's most surprising error is his reference to the economist Friedrich Hayek. Soros cites Hayek as an advocate of laissez-faire and then goes on to reject laissez-faire economics on the grounds that it is a dogmatic system at once claiming and demanding perfect knowledge and equilibrium. Of course, Hayek's major contribution to economics was his critique of scientific assumptions in equilibrium-based economics. In a nutshell, Hayek argues that the market process relies on contextual, personal knowledge to coordinate the activities of millions of individual participants—a vaguely Popperian notion. Soros misses Hayek's crucial point, and wastes another several hundred words sacking the scarecrow version of capitalism he has constructed.

Tadd Wilson
Fairfax, Va.

George Soros is right to criticize classical economics, but he is wrong to criticize capitalism. It is hard to believe that he has actually read Hayek, who found the same flaws in conventional economics that Soros does, but spent his life showing that capitalism was the best way to the open society Soros claims to champion.

The virtues of openness, humility, and a willingness to admit that we do not have all the answers are not antithetical to capitalism but an integral part of it. Hayek and other economists of the Austrian School have shown that economic exchange is fundamentally a process of knowledge discovery. Permitting this process to flourish requires an admission that knowledge of resource distribution in society is fragmented, chaotic, and often unattainable. Soros's capitalism is a poorly constructed straw man.

Barry Fagin
Colorado Springs, Colo.

George Soros understands very well why Karl Popper places the open society between the extremes of fascism and communism. He unfortunately fails his mentor by effectively defining the post-Second World War open society in the United States and Europe as a capitalist free-for-all that up to 1989 was kept in check by the Cold War balance of power. Now Soros increasingly fears that unabashed selfishness will rob the West of the advantages it has enjoyed.

The trials and tribulations of the former Eastern bloc are in fact no threat to the open society. Nations like Hungary, Albania, and Romania must learn that the struggle between social cohesion and individualism is not a zero-sum game. The viability of the open society depends on the balance between minimum state control and minimum personal constraints. The pragmatist Popper understood the need for the state to selectively and properly intervene where capitalism and individualism had gone astray, and to put in place those safeguards that would protect society from such abuses.

If Soros worries about the open society, it is those social safeguards that he should turn his attention to.

Thanasis Bakolas
Brookline, Mass.

George Soros replies:

I have to admit that my reference to Friedrich Hayek was misleading. My assertion that Hayek, one of the apostles of laissez-faire, was also a passionate proponent of the open society is, strictly speaking, true; but the context in which I made it implied that Hayek shared the prevailing view that markets are perfect, and that is false. Hayek criticized economic theory on the very same grounds as I do: participants act on the basis of imperfect understanding, not perfect knowledge.

Faced with imperfections in both markets and regulations, Hayek opted for letting the markets have their way, because

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1 T. water

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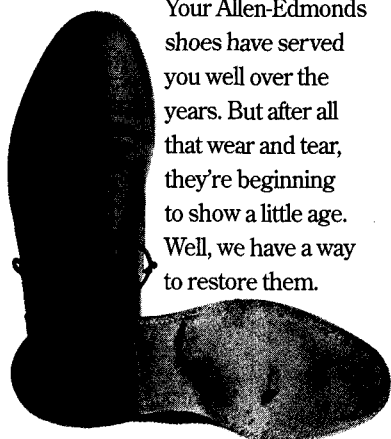
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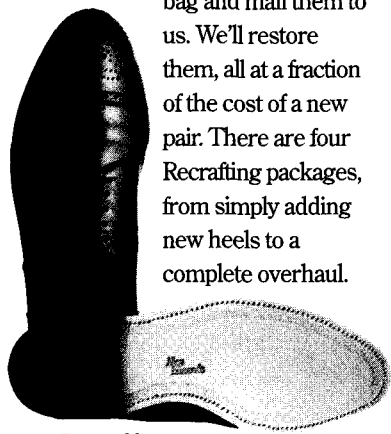
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errors would result in financial losses and so would tend to be corrected. I agree with Hayek on the merits of markets as error-correcting mechanisms, but I contend that markets have other deficiencies to which Hayek failed to give proper weight. Financial markets are inherently unstable; left to their own devices, they are liable to break down. More important, many social values are not properly represented by market forces. This defect has become more pronounced since Hayek's time by the conversion of the professions and social services into businesses.

Norman Borlaug

Gregg Easterbrook's profile of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Norman Borlaug, "Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity" (January *Atlantic*), is less a paean to Borlaug than a major hatchet job on those who oppose his solution to hunger and malnutrition.

Although Easterbrook fails to name explicitly a single one of Borlaug's opponents, the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First) has no problem placing itself among that group. To claim that merely because we disagree with Borlaug, those of us who oppose Green Revolution technologies are a bunch of effete, insensitive northern elites who do not give a damn about human suffering in Asia, Africa, and Latin America is character assassination by innuendo.

A great many of Borlaug's opponents have as many years experience living and working in Africa, Asia, and Latin America as he does. And most of us care every bit as much as Borlaug does about the unnecessary human suffering in those parts of the world, as well as in North America and Europe. But we have reached a different set of conclusions about the causes of hunger and therefore about appropriate solutions for solving the problem. Borlaug's analysis and Easterbrook's representation of the debate contain a number of fundamental flaws.

First, as Food First has always argued, hunger is not caused by food shortages or population growth rates. If that were the case, then the food increases Easterbrook erroneously attributes almost solely to the genius of one American man should have ended the problems of hunger and malnutrition in India, Pak-

istan, and Mexico, where Borlaug claims such success. The fundamental cause of the hunger has always involved the distribution of existing food supplies.

Second, Borlaug and Easterbrook are dead wrong to claim that environmentalists oppose increasing food-crop yields. The real debate is about identifying those methods that are safest for farmers, farm workers, consumers, and the environment.

Another irony, left unnoted in the article, is the documented fact that Green Revolution technologies lead to declining crop yields after prolonged use, in addition to damaging the environment and human health.

Third, the article gives an incomplete picture of the World Bank's "withdrawal" from food production in Africa. The World Bank and the U.S. government currently advocate the export of Green Revolution technologies to Africa together with free-trade policies and food imports. The World Bank and the U.S. government are trying to convince African countries that their comparative advantages lie not in staple food production but in such areas as cut flowers and specialty vegetables—crops requiring vast amounts of chemical fertilizer and extensive irrigation. Is Easterbrook completely unaware, for example, of the growing economic importance of these crops in Africa and the horrendous environmental consequences due to a reliance on chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation systems?

Deborah L. Toler
Peter R. Rosset
Food First
Oakland, Calif.

Gregg Easterbrook marred an otherwise good piece of journalism with his gratuitous and erroneous attacks on environmentalists for limiting the use of inorganic fertilizers in sub-Saharan Africa.

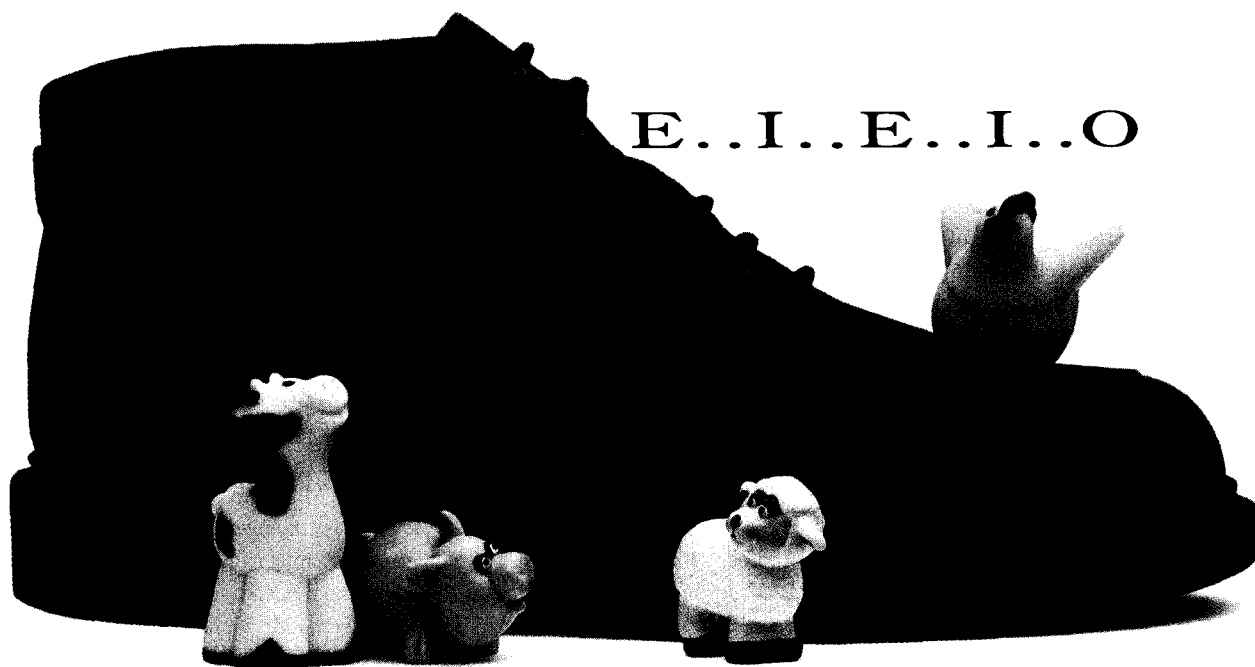
In 1990, at Norman Borlaug's request, I led a mission to review his program in Ghana, where fertilizer consumption is very low. The mission's conclusions were that the costs of importing, transporting, distributing, and marketing fertilizer made it too expensive to be used by the many thousands of small farmers growing food, even though it could raise yields substantially. There is an urgent need to promote technological change in food



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production in sub-Saharan Africa, where most small-scale farmers are understandably risk-averse and operate in areas of erratic rainfall and weak infrastructure. The promotion of change may require some subsidization of fertilizer use as part of a broader package of sustainable soil, water, and pest-management technologies. Many environmentalists would welcome such an approach, not only because it would help small farmers to increase food production but also because it would ease pressure to expand production into fragile areas unsuited to it.

Monty Yudelman
World Wildlife Fund
Washington, D.C.

Itake exception to Gregg Easterbrook's assertion that the World Bank was pressured by environmentalists to avoid introducing high-yield farming techniques to Africa. In fact the bank has invested \$2 billion in African agriculture over the past five years. We are deeply concerned that fertilizer use in Africa is so low, and are continuing to work on the supply problems that make it particularly expensive for African farmers. The bank believes that the introduction of high-yield techniques must go forward hand in hand with broad-based rural development to provide access to markets, education, and other income-generating initiatives to help farmers move toward sustainable agriculture.

As part of this rural development agenda, we agree that much greater attention needs to be given to soil-fertility management, making maximum use of on-farm organic sources as well as inorganic fertilizer. Indeed, the fertilizer Borlaug is promoting in Ethiopia (diammonium phosphate), which Easterbrook describes as a "key reform," is being financed by the bank under the National Fertilizer Project, for which the bank is providing \$120 million over five years, most of it to buy fertilizer. The bank is also collaborating with the Sasakawa Africa Association and the Carter Center (SG-2000): bank staffers serve on the council of agricultural experts that advises SG-2000; bank and SG-2000 staff have participated together in numerous conferences and workshops, and have shared knowledge and resources in their efforts to develop agriculture in Africa. The bank believes that all these efforts must be carried out in

the context of revitalizing broad-based rural development, and is committing its resources to such a program.

Ismail Serageldin
The World Bank
Washington, D.C.

Just to set the record straight, the Rockefeller Foundation continues its commitment to raising the yields and incomes of smallholder farmers in Asia and Africa; we believe that fertilizer is essential to that task and that its use is consistent with sound environmental preservation.

The agricultural sciences program has the largest budget among foundation divisions, and over the past ten years has spent about 40 percent of that budget on African smallholder agriculture, concentrating our efforts in Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. Much of that support is directed at enabling African agricultural scientists to learn the high-yield agricultural approaches that are needed to enable Africa to feed itself—the approaches that Norman Borlaug has used successfully.

Robert W. Herdt
The Rockefeller Foundation
New York, N.Y.

Gregg Easterbrook replies:

Deborah Toler and Peter Rosset make some good points, but they also provide an instructive sampler of the sorts of shaky reasoning employed by those who oppose extending to Africa the benefits that high-yield agriculture has brought to the world's affluent nations.

For one, they are hypersensitive. Nothing in the article describes Borlaug's opponents as "effete, insensitive northern elites who do not give a damn about human suffering." The closest to this is a statement from Borlaug—a quotation, not an assertion by me—that some of his opponents are "elitists" who conveniently live in the United States, where food is overabundant.

Another problem with Toler and Rosset's reasoning is their contention that "Green Revolution technologies lead to declining crop yields after prolonged use." This is a pseudo-statistic beloved of opponents to technical agriculture. The *rate of increase* in yield has begun declining for some Green Revolution crops, which may be worrisome enough; but the probable cause is farmers' cut-

ting back on the application of chemicals, which environmentalists ought to favor. Most midwestern acres, where high-yield has been used longest, continue to produce more food and fiber each year.

Reviewing Views

Since when does a responsible reviewer review a *chapter* of a book and claim he's done his job? In "Whatever Happened to Integration?" (February *Atlantic*), Gerald Early reviews the second chapter of my book *The Trouble With Friendship*. He leaves the impression that my subject is the depiction of race relationships in movies and chides me for omitting items that deserve to be in such a work. But in fact only one of my twelve chapters deals with movies. The rest are about America as a caste society, differences of outlook between middle-class and bottom-class blacks, the trial of a welfare mother, the writings of Shelby Steele, and several related matters. Like professing and editing, reviewing is an honorable profession when practiced honorably. "Whatever Happened to Integration?" is dishonorable work.

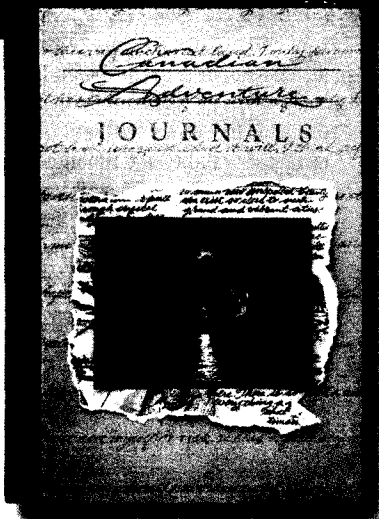
Benjamin DeMott
Worthington, Mass.

Gerald Early replies:

One of the pivotal ideas in Benjamin DeMott's book is that capitalist, democratic culture and its finest creation, popular culture, are both sentimental and deluding, thus making an understanding of history and politics impossible. I deal with this idea because I see it as fundamental to his book and because aspects of this idea have engaged a great deal of my writing and thinking. How is it "dishonorable" for me vigorously to examine how Mr. DeMott uses it in his book? I have a right as a reviewer to focus on the elements of a book regarding which my critical abilities can be of help to the reader—and, I dare say, the writer as well. Mr. DeMott had no substantive counterargument to my critique of his own basic argument about culture; thus, I feel that I did my job fairly and competently as a reviewer. He may be unhappy with what I said, but I addressed with some scholarly breadth what he put forth as a fundamental view in his book.

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Government

May 1: New Federal Aviation Administration regulations aimed at reducing noise pollution in the Grand Canyon go into effect today. Among them is a rule that tour flights over the canyon may operate only between 8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. from May through September, and between 9:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. during the rest of the year. The regulations are part of an ongoing effort to restore quiet to the canyon. By next January some 80 percent of the canyon will be designated a "no-fly" zone for tour flights; this is twice the area that is now restricted. Further plans call for phasing out the "noisiest" aircraft—a classification that includes most of the aircraft currently in use over the canyon—by 2008. 25: Today Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, becomes the longest-serving senator in U.S. history, as his tenure reaches 41 years and 10 months. The record was previously held by Carl Hayden, Democrat of Arizona. Thurmond was first elected to the Senate in 1954 as a Democrat in a write-in campaign.



The Skies

Comet Hale-Bopp should still be visible to the naked eye for observers in the Northern Hemisphere at the beginning of the month, before dropping out of view in this hemisphere for a couple thousand years; look west-northwest at twilight. May 6: The Eta Aquarid meteor shower peaks. The Moon is new and so will not interfere with viewing. 16: Mars lies just above the waxing Moon. 22: Full Moon, also known this month as the Milk, Mother's, or Planting Moon.



Environment

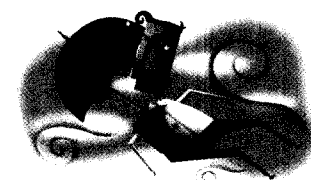
May is the peak breeding month for frogs. This year's frog eggs and population will come under intense scrutiny, as researchers seek explanations for the deformities that have recently been observed in disproportionate numbers of frogs. The problem came to light two years ago, when a group of Minnesota middle school students on a hike noticed that half the frogs they saw had deformed legs. Since then scientists have discovered large numbers of deformed frogs in at least eight other states across the country. The Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey will establish a nationwide reporting center for studies to be conducted this summer, and they plan to hold a meeting of experts in November to discuss research findings. Among the causes postulated for the deformities are parasites, toxic chemicals, and increased ultraviolet radiation resulting from damage to the earth's ozone layer.

Food

May 2: Starting today, according to a new Food and Drug Administration regulation, restaurants are accountable for all health and nutrition claims, such as "low fat," "light," and "heart healthy," made on their menus. Although restaurateurs, unlike the manufacturers of packaged foods, are not obligated to supply complete nutritional information about their products, they must be able



to demonstrate a "reasonable basis" for any health and nutrition claims made about them, consistent with the definitions in the FDA's Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990. In the case of a menu item labeled "low fat," a restaurant could, for example, show that the recipe came from a low-fat cookbook. The new rule was prompted by a class-action suit brought by consumer groups against a number of restaurants alleged to be making unsubstantiated health or nutrition claims about their food.



Expiring Patent

No. 4,203,457. Attachable Wearable Umbrella. "A collapsible umbrella which is detachably mounted to a garment of a wearer so as to be supported . . . in the opened position of the umbrella above the head of the wearer, comprising an umbrella assembly [attached to] a pair of . . . brackets each adaptable for mounting externally on the shoulder section of a coat."

Health & Safety

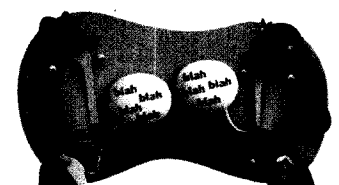
Starting this month patients in Massachusetts who are curious about the malpractice histories of their physicians should be able to find this information on the Internet and on CD-ROMs at public and hospital libraries (an 800 number has been available since November). Last year Massachusetts enacted a bill mandating public access to the malpractice awards, lawsuit settlements, and felony and serious misdemeanor convictions of all its doctors; previously records of court actions could be obtained only by scouring courthouse files, and information on out-of-court settlements was not available at all. Massachusetts is the first state to require that mal-

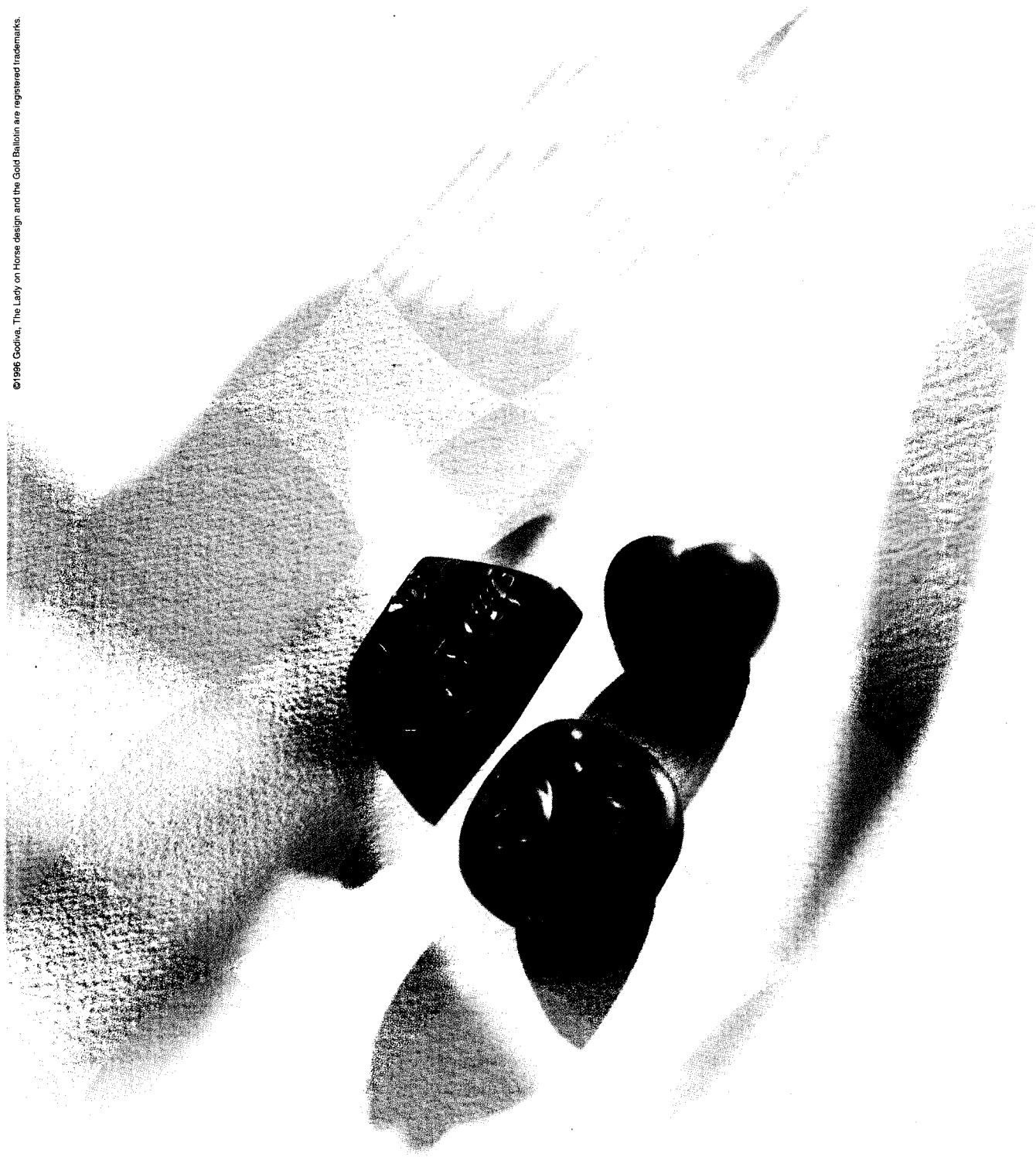


practice histories be made available. Also this month researchers funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute of Nursing Research plan to begin a five-year, six-state trial to investigate whether basic cognitive training can bolster seniors' everyday skills such as balancing a checkbook and managing medication, and ultimately lead to greater and longer independence in old age.

75 Years Ago

Robert M. Gay, writing in the May, 1922, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "General information is . . . the salt of conversation, because, when the facts exchanged are all useless, one is as good as another, there is no chilly atmosphere of shop, and talk circulates freely; but special information is always aristocratical and hierarchical. A mind that is full of the data of ethics, for example, is supercilious toward one that is full of the data of millinery; but, as general information, fashions in hats may be even more significant than fashions in morals. It should be remembered, too, that a man who is rich in general information is not at all the same as a 'well-informed person.' The latter always fills us with alarm, outside the classroom or lecture-hall, because he has never admitted anything to his mind without first testing its validity and timeliness, and then connecting it with matters already there. . . . He has attempted to carry over into general information the rules that govern special. This will never do."





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The Disunited States

"Devolution"—shifting power from Washington to the fifty states—is no cure for what ails American government

THE wisdom of transferring governmental power away from Washington and toward the separate states enjoys something as close to consensus as American politics often sees. Devolution figured in the 1996 presidential election chiefly as a conventional piety, like family values or fiscal rectitude. Bob Dole brandished on the stump his pocket copy of the Tenth Amendment, affirming the principle of state primacy. Bill Clinton endorsed the "inexorable move to push more basic jobs of the public sector back to the state level," and the 1996 Democratic platform featured the taunt "Republicans talked about shifting power back to states and communities—Democrats are doing it."

Recent surveys conducted by the Gallup Organization, *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC News, *Business Week* and the Harris Group, and Hart and Teeter have discovered strong public support for state rather than federal leadership in education, crime control, welfare, job training, low-income housing, transportation, and farm policies. A bellwether poll conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates in 1995 for *The Washington Post*, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Harvard University found that by a margin of 61 to 24 percent, respondents trusted their state governments to "do a better job running things" than the federal government. Except for Jewish and black voters, every subgroup gave the edge to the states, including self-defined liberals, Democrats, and, by 72 to 21 percent, voters under thirty.

Enthusiasm for devolution, among elites and the electorate alike, has already reconfigured public authority. Welfare reform is only the most vivid recent instance of control over policy cascading to lower levels of government.

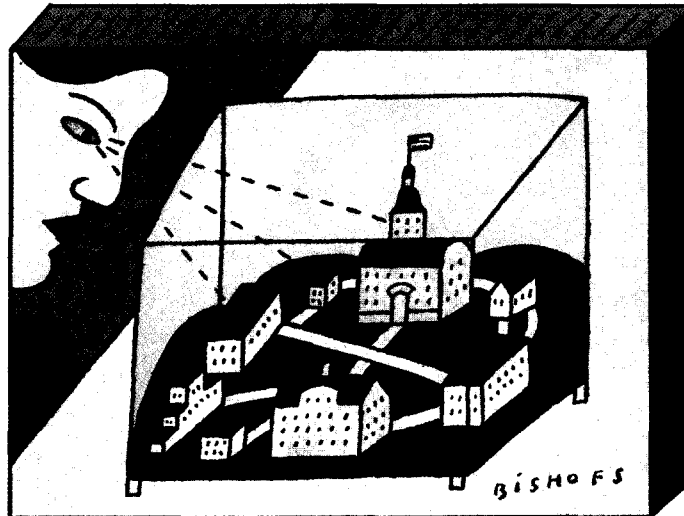
Budget figures underscore Washington's eclipse. Federal

spending is increasingly dominated by transfer programs, interest on the national debt, and the shrinking if still enormous defense budget. Within what most people think of as the government, states and cities occupy a huge and growing share of the terrain. State and local spending—the majority supported by state and local taxes, but some by federal grants—is over 13 percent of the gross domestic product:

more than seven times the amount of federal domestic spending for other than transfers, debt service, and intergovernmental grants. If Congress and the Administration follow through on their budget-cutting plans, the federal government's domestic role will continue to shrivel. So the United States' public sector—already about a third smaller, as a share of the overall economy, than the average in other industrialized countries—will shrink further. Or the relative importance of the cities and states will soar. Or both.

■ ■ ■

Some admittedly alluring logic supports the ascendancy of the states. Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis popularized a resonant metaphor when he wrote that "a single courageous State may, if its citizens choose, serve as a laboratory; and try novel social and economic experiments without risk to the rest of the country." Varied state strategies test and winnow policy alternatives, providing the nation with information about what works and what doesn't. Beyond the laboratories-of-democracy scenario, in which diversity invites the discovery and diffusion of best practice, there can be value in diversity itself. Since priorities differ, the country may be better off if constituents can find arrayed within its borders alternative packages of services, regulatory regimes,



by John D. Donahue

Illustration by Maris Bishofs

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and tax burdens from which to choose.

A related line of reasoning stresses the virtues of competition. One engine of private-sector efficiency is the constant pressure that enterprises face to match the pace set by ambitious rivals. Extending that logic to government, states that are compelled to compete for citizens and investment *must* be more creative and more diligent in carrying out the tasks of governance than an unchallenged Leviathan in Washington.

A quite different argument for devolution as a core strategy for public-sector reform is commonest among those with direct experience in or around the federal government. It varies in its details, depending on one's specific exposure to the crippling debt and toxic politics that have come to dominate Washington. But in its essence it boils down to a kind of grim gratitude that since we have wrecked one level of government, the Founding Fathers had the foresight to provide a spare.

There is also a soothing a priori case for predicting that public-sector efficiency will increase as responsibilities flow to lower levels of government. Yet the states have, at best, a slightly milder case of the inefficiency that chronically plagues the federal public sector. And for at least some functions (public

Moreover, devolution is largely irrelevant to the debt service and middle-class entitlements that are straining citizens' tolerance for taxation. The ascendancy of the states, by the most optimistic assessment, will have only a minor impact on the cost of American government. This argument is not based on ideology or economic theory. It is a matter of arithmetic. In 1996 total public spending came to roughly \$2.3 trillion. State and local activities, funded by state and local taxes, already accounted for about one third of this total. Another third consisted of check-writing programs, such as Social Security and Medicare. National defense (12 percent of the total), interest on the national debt (10 percent), and federal grants to state and local governments (another 10 percent) accounted for most of the remaining third of the public sector. All other federal domestic undertakings, taken together, claimed between four and five percent of total government spending.

Now, suppose that every last thing the federal government does, aside from running defense and foreign affairs and writing checks (to entitlement claimants, debt holders, and state and local governments), were transferred to the states—national parks and museums, air-traffic control, the FBI, the Border Patrol, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Weather Service, student loans, and all the rest. Suppose, then, that the states proved able to do everything that the federal government used to do, and do it a full 10 percent more efficiently. The cost of government would fall by less than half of one percent.

■ ■ ■

America is struggling to maintain itself as a middle-class society in a world grown inhospitable to that heritage, and our successors will judge this generation by whether we succeed or fail in the struggle. The reshaping of the industrial landscape, the maturation of the mid-century transportation and communications revolutions, and the emergence as economic rivals of huge populations long dismissed as backward are transforming the planet into an ever more integrated market. Like the industrial upheaval of the late 1800s, today's economic transformation is widening consumers' options, expanding opportunities for those who are able to seize them, conferring

staggering wealth on a select few—and stranding those unable to adapt. Observers with the luxury of taking the long view, or those with no special stake in any single country, may find this moment in history to be richly promising. But it is by no means assured that America's magnificent achievement of broadly shared prosperity will survive.

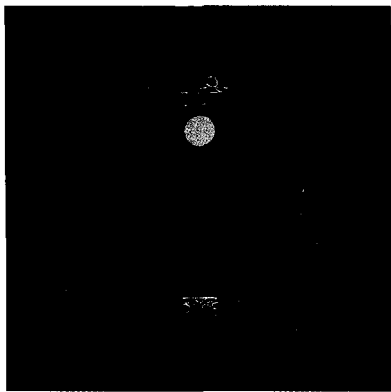
Devolution will worsen the odds. Shared prosperity, in the maelstrom of economic change tearing away at the industrial underpinnings of middle-class culture, is an artifact of policy. Policies to shore up the middle class include work-based anti-poverty efforts that become both more important and more expensive as unskilled jobs evaporate, relentless investments in education and job training, measures to strengthen employees' leverage in the workplace, and a progressive tilt to the overall burden of taxation. The individual states—fearful of losing industry and richer residents to lower-tax rivals and anxious to minimize their burden of needy citizens—will find such policies nearly impossible to sustain.

As Washington sheds responsibilities, and interstate rivalry intensifies, it becomes unrealistic to contemplate anything but a small-government agenda. But even for principled conservatives, devolution is likely to prove less satisfying than expected. Since it has been justified as improving, not shrinking, government, the ascendancy of the states skirts the debate over the public sector's proper size and scope. Like the run-up in federal debt, devolution short-circuits deliberation over government's purpose by making activism impossible—for a time. America's federal system is sufficiently resilient that unless citizens are persuaded of small government's merits, the tilt toward the states that suppresses public-sector ambition will eventually (and after a hard-to-predict price has been paid) be reversed. By attempting to enthrone the states as the sole locus of legitimate government, conservatives muffle their own voices in the conversation over the country's future.

And by the standards of those who believe that what ails America is something other than big government, shifting authority to competing states, though it may solve minor problems, is likely to cause or perpetuate far graver ones. Federal officials, as a group, are certainly no

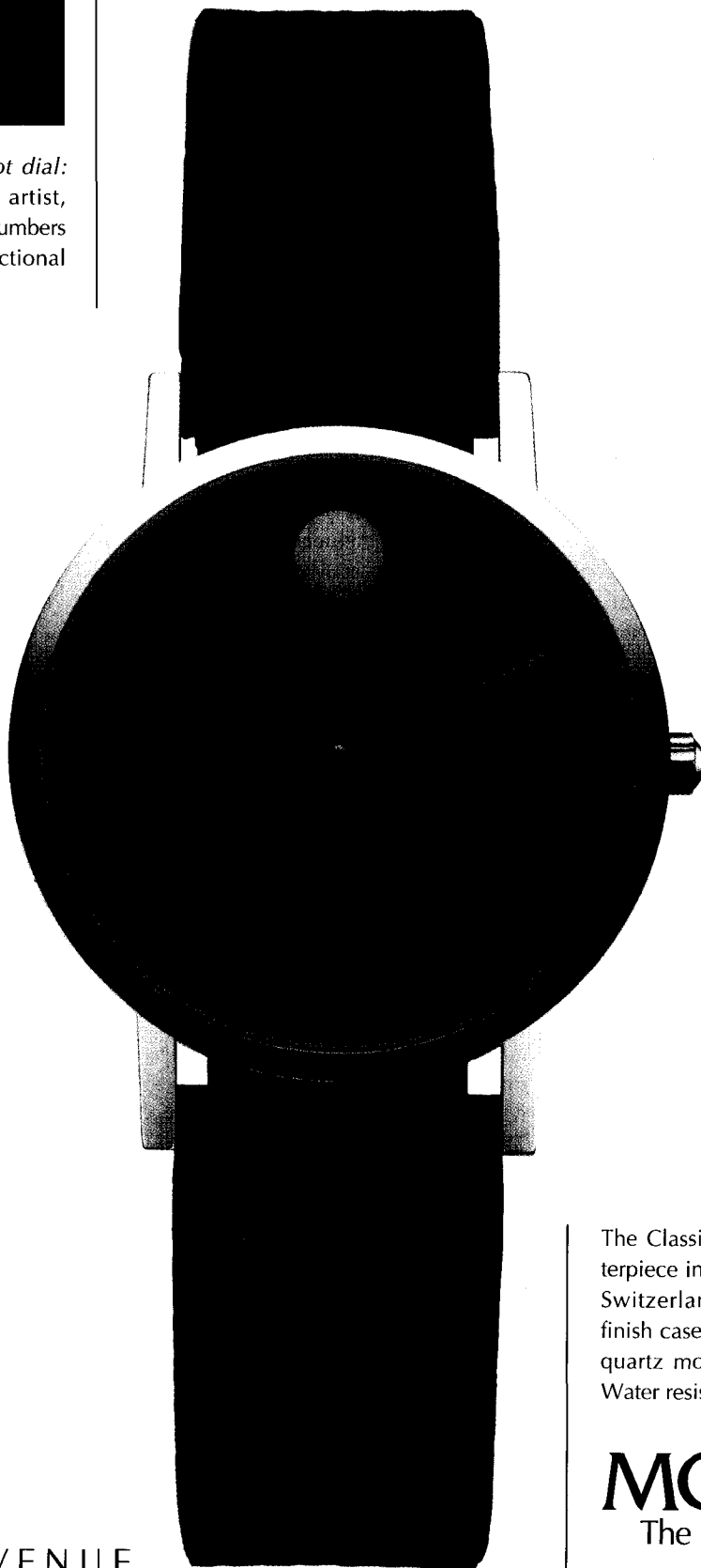
The ascendancy of the states, by the most optimistic assessment, will barely affect the cost of government.

schools, license bureaus) claims of superior efficiency ring hollow indeed. Even where decentralization does promise significant economies, it is rare that economic or managerial logic will call for the reassignment of authority away from the central government but then stop at the states. State boundaries have been drawn by a capricious history, and only by accident does a state constitute the most logical economic unit for either making policy or delivering services.



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wiser, more farsighted, or defter at implementation than their state counterparts. But America united remains much less subject to the flight of wealth and the influx of need than are its constituent states. Policies to shrink the underclass and solidify the middle class are thus far more sustainable at the federal level.

■ ■ ■

Five broad propositions suggest how we can readjust the federal-state balance to meet contemporary challenges. They

Devolution risks truncating a vital conversation over the scale and purpose of America's public sector.

will not be the last word on the proper structuring of America's federal system but are offered as a contribution, and perhaps a catalyst, to the next round of America's endless argument.

1. *Do devolve—where it makes sense.* Underscoring devolution's limits should not be misconstrued as belittling the benefits of moving duties as far down the governmental scale as possible. Many responsibilities do belong at the state level. Where states vary greatly in circumstances or goals, where external impacts are minor or manageable, where the payoff from innovation exceeds the advantages of uniformity, or where competition can be expected to inspire efficiency gains instead of destructive stratagems, the central government should stand clear—both to honor our culture's durable preference for decentralized power and to forestall federal overload. The list of public functions in which Washington has little legitimate interest is long and important. But it is shorter today than it was a quarter of a century ago, and will be shorter still another quarter century hence.

2. *Restore federal primacy in anti-poverty policy.* The devolution of anti-poverty policy will eventually be seen as a mistake, if perhaps an inevitable one. By the mid-1990s the Gordian knot

of the welfare status quo may have been beyond untangling. We will never know; the first Clinton Administration lost its nerve on welfare reform and forfeited the issue to Congress. But with the first serious recession (if not before), the new state-based welfare policy's built-in bias toward undue harshness will be revealed. As hard times swell the ranks of needy families while hobbling job-creation efforts, as welfare is forced to compete with every other budget item for shrinking state funds, and as taxpayers and officials ponder the prospect that anything but the sparsest safety net will lure the poor from other states, anti-poverty programs will spiral toward the deepest degree of austerity that citizens' consciences will permit. Budgetary and political realities at the federal level will preclude reversing course anytime soon. Nor is there yet any blueprint for achieving the humane, work-oriented welfare policy that virtually everyone endorses in principle. We have embarked upon a period of state-dominated anti-poverty policy, and may as well make the best of it by harvesting every bit of evidence that state experimentation produces, to be analyzed and stockpiled for the eventual reconstruction of a national system. And we should hope that the country does not become permanently coarsened by what we will witness in the meantime.

3. *Recognize the states' limits as stewards of education.* Revenue crunches and the accumulation of competing burdens may lead states to fumble their long-standing responsibilities for education and training—just when productive skills are soaring in importance. At a minimum Washington should enlarge its role in financing higher education, from which the states are already retreating. The federal role in primary and secondary education will, and should, remain limited, but national performance standards ought to undergird state and local reform efforts. And we must be vigilant against the prospect that budgetary pressures and fractious politics will lead states to retreat from the campaign of sustained, universal education investment that is the best hope for America's middle class. The odds that this retreat will occur remain difficult to gauge; the calamitous consequences should it do so are all too clear.

4. *Curb the competition for business.* Not least to lower the risk that budgetary pressures will force states to retreat from education investment, Washington should place limits on the competition for business that is increasingly warping state taxing and spending policies. Bidding wars for business have intensified in recent years. Beyond the high-profile rivalries for major plants and sports teams, there is a systematic evolution of state policies to favor footloose enterprises. What states surrender to lure or retain jobs, moreover, yields no net national gains; incentives may affect the location of economic activity within America, but don't appreciably augment the total. Politicians and businesses won't like it, but citizens would be well served by the sturdiest curbs that can pass constitutional muster on state location subsidies and tax incentives.

5. *Fix the federal government.* A feeble federal government served Americans badly in the 1780s and will do far worse today. We must redouble efforts to make federal operations more efficient, innovative, and accountable. Serious federal reform may not be gentler than devolution to the public-sector status quo. Quite the contrary—it will often involve privatization, vouchers, and more traumatic “reinvention” than Washington has yet seen. But there is no inconsistency in pursuing common goals through means that make the most of the market. Beyond such procedural improvements, we must confront the politically difficult budgetary decisions needed to rebalance federal priorities and to forestall Washington's scheduled retreat into near irrelevance throughout much of the domestic sphere.

The embrace of devolution risks truncating a painful but vital national conversation over the scale and purpose of America's public sector. “Shrink government” is one answer to America's problems but not the only answer. Paradoxically, if we want to have a free choice about whether and how we will prepare all willing workers for rewarding roles in the global economy, about the terms on which our citizens engage global capital, and about how we should share the burdens of economic change—if we want to have a choice, we must choose together, as a nation. Fifty separate choices add up to no choice at all. ☛

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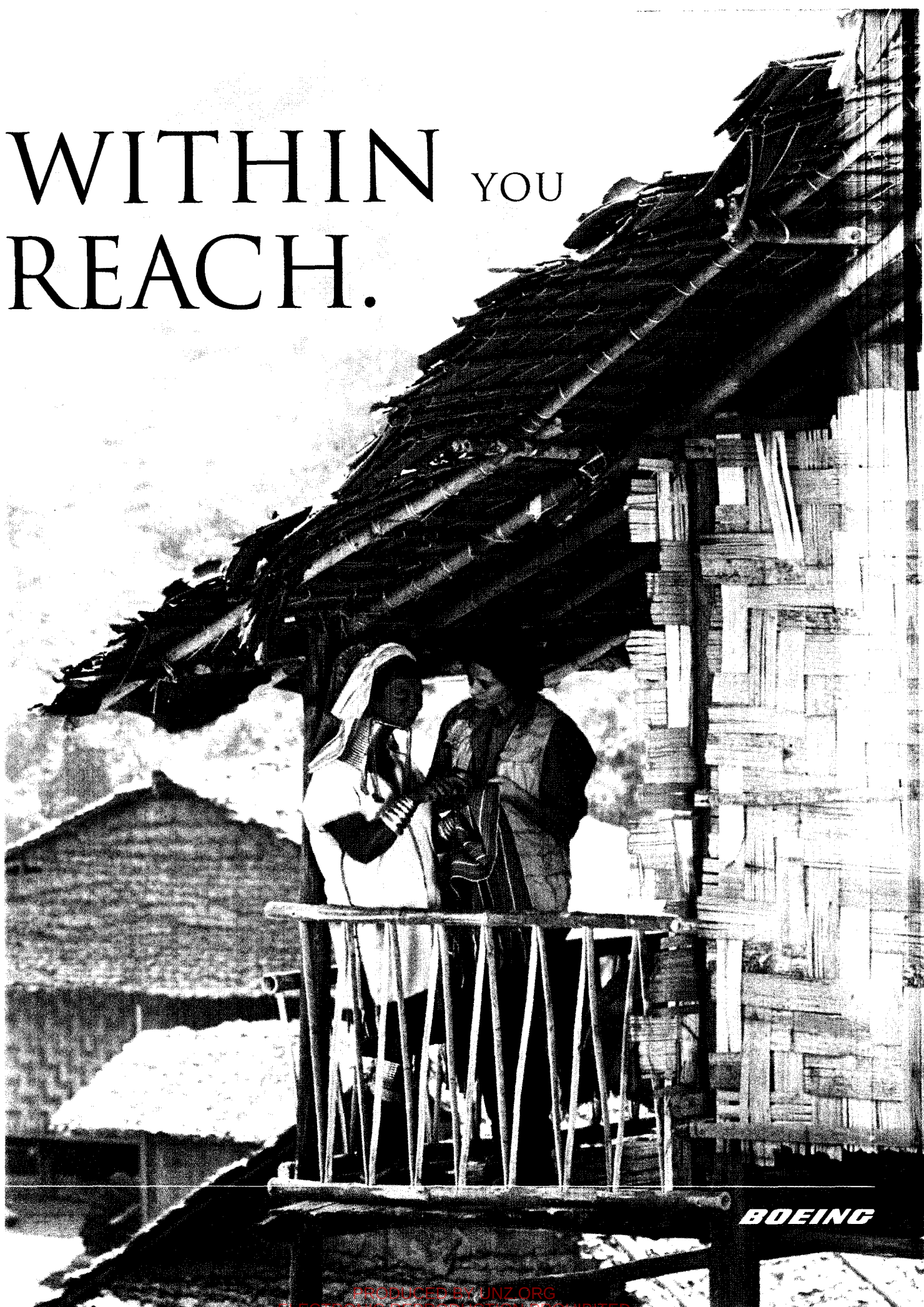


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Hidden Colors

The rubble on one of the few remaining gray blocks near the old Checkpoint Charlie reveals much about what Berlin is losing, and losing fast

ONE way to take Berlin is to wonder at the stupendous mess caused by the renewal effort. Another is to lose oneself in the new architecture, which is surprisingly unpretentious but a bit cold and conformist. Yet another is to keep one's distance, as Germans from the West tend to do; they seem terrified by the mystique of the place and the fact that it is so much bigger and more threatening than the German cities they know. One can try picking out East Berliners from West

Berliners, which used to be easy but now requires flair and a knowledge of hairdos and street posture. Or one can grow impatient for the new Berlin to be finished and show itself in its true colors.

The hard thing is to remain aware of what is being smoothed away. Heiner Müller, eulogized as Germany's best postwar playwright when he died, just over a year ago, had given himself a mission: "German history is my enemy," he used to say, "and I want to stare into the white of its eye." Berlin was Müller's

home, and the city is covering its tracks so fast that it has resorted to painting a red line through its heart to show baffled visitors where the Wall used to run. One simply can't see where it was anymore, let alone make out the moral silhouette of this painful century.

This is a strange time in the life of Berlin—the hiatus between its redesignation as Germany's capital and 1999, when it will begin acting the part. Each day one finds oneself losing touch a little more with what went on before. The experience is not entirely welcome—though, heaven knows, it ought to be, given what did go on. There was something truly weird about the old East Berlin in particular, something so awful that the place possessed a certain appeal. Now the bombed sites and vacant lots that told of Hitler's madness and pocked central Berlin for half a century are as good as

Kronenstrasse, in the heart of old Berlin: only Nos. 11, 10, and 3 (from far left) have been spared demolition

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*There was something
so weird and awful
about the old East
Berlin that it possessed
a certain appeal.*

gone. Even the shoddy Communist building style, which more than anything else revealed the soul of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR), is slipping into anonymity, as modern construction sweeps through Berlin's old center in the eastern sector. The top names in international architecture—the superstars here are Americans, British, French, Italians—and the developers who employ them are, well, ruining the view.

Those who hanker after an “old Berlin” have not exactly given up. Indeed, they seem to be on a roll. Architectural traditionalists who favor cornices and a dose of old-time Prussian arrogance were laughed at when it came to planning a new Berlin after the Wall fell, in 1989. The style that city planners chose was relentlessly classical-modern, which meant filling the void at Berlin's heart with flat stone-and-glass façades of restricted height (100 feet). But now there are second thoughts. The conservative Christian Democrats who head the reunified capital's coalition government have detected a welling up of discontent among Berlin's put-upon populace. Isn't the current approach too rigorous? Where is the warmth? The character? The upshot is that the city government's longtime building director, a man of Prussian rigor who rejected frills, has been replaced by a warmer-hearted soul from Germany's far-western and far softer Rheinland, who says that she has in mind “a little fantasy, some poetry.”

So traditionalists believe that they are back in the fray, particularly on a crucial mile of Unter den Linden heading east from the Brandenburg Gate. Maybe. But the classical-modernists are streets ahead of them, being able to build faster (an advantage that appeals to investors and developers). In any case, the traditionalists wish not so much to hold on to genuine history as to replicate it. The base camp

for their comeback is a near copy of the once-renowned Adlon Hotel at its old site by the Brandenburg Gate. The Adlon replica revives a hotel that was so plush a place to stay when it opened, in 1907, that Kaiser Wilhelm stopped anyone from checking in until he had tried out its pomp for himself. Many Germans want to re-create the imperial castle of the Hohenzollerns (the Prussian dynasty) right where it used to stand, between two arms of the river Spree at the other end of Unter den Linden. Think what one will of this scheme, it has the support of Germany's most powerful citizen, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and, it seems, of the Christian Democratic mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen.

Most Germans assume that Allied bombs destroyed the royal castle, but in truth the first Communist masters of the DDR inherited it in eminently restorable shape and demolished it in 1950 out of anti-imperial spite. Diepgen would love to remove the crass Palace of the Republic that the Communists built in place of the castle for use by their rubber-stamp parliament. This is a touchy matter, though. The orange-toned DDR edifice somehow became the pride of ordinary East Germans, and it will hurt the feelings of a lot of Diepgen's new supporters in the eastern part of the city to bring it down, especially for the purpose he now has in mind. I wonder, anyway, whether Heiner Müller, were he still around, would bother to stare at an imperial Prussian mock-up.



No. 10 Kronenstrasse

MORE likely Müller's eyes would be glued on Kronenstrasse. These days there are precious few streets like Kronenstrasse left in the Mitte (central) district, Berlin's old heart. Even among the half dozen that for some reason or other have not been overwhelmed by the construction wave, this street is special: it is a class apart in drabness. Right next to Checkpoint Charlie, the Cold War's east-west crossing point, Kronenstrasse reeks of the Berlin that people of my postwar generation always imagined. Irish and Polish hardhats have almost finished building a showy American business center at Checkpoint Charlie, yet somehow one can still hear the stomp of East German border guards there and the rustling trenchcoats of CIA and KGB agents whose offices overlooked the crossing point from opposite sides of the wall.

The street's bottom-dog eccentricity is only accentuated by Friedrichstrasse, which it crosses. From Prussian imperial times to the Third Reich, Friedrichstrasse was Berlin's equivalent of New York's Fifth Avenue, and it has already returned as a shining token of the new Berlin's commercial purpose. Friedrichstrasse is for now short of well-heeled shoppers, but more deutschmarks are said to have been sunk into its renaissance than have been invested by German business in all Eastern Europe since communism's fall. Next to it Kronenstrasse is a disinherited mess. Kronenstrasse hangs on the verge of new things, but after all the roles it has played in this century—the name, “Crown Street,” was meant to honor its Prussian past—it seems unsure whether it wants to play another.

While strolling recently on Kronenstrasse I came across Liselotte Irmeler in Pfefferkorn's, an electrician's shop that, exceptionally, came through the DDR era under private ownership. The shop is like a Victorian cupboard jammed with coils and bulbs; maybe the DDR decided it was unworthy of a state takeover. I had been looking for someone like Frau Irmeler. She arrived on Kronenstrasse in 1941, after marrying the Irmeler boy who ran the family store. Later, under the Communist regime, when she remarried, her son took it over, renaming it Pfefferkorn's after her new husband. She is a chirpy little woman in a gray coat—a real DDR veteran. I wanted to know

(Continued on page 36)

MAY
1997

Arts & ENTERTAINMENT PREVIEW



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Sleeping Beauty

Theater

A Murder-
Mystery Musical

Popular Music

Heavy-Metal
Cellos

Jazz

Jim Hall's
Textures

Film

Gritty Britain

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Dance and Theater

BY AUSTIN BAER AND NANCY DALVA

CLASSIC MUSICALS IN THE MAKING

The American musical is turning back the clock, not a minute too soon. Real lyrics with real tunes have returned, thank heaven. For proof see Broadway's dance-marathon tale *Steel Pier*, songs by *Chicago* and *Cabaret*'s John Kander and Fred Ebb (for tickets call 212-307-4100), and off-Broadway's black-comedy murder mystery *The Green*

Heart, songs by Rusty Magee (212-239-6200). Both opened last month, long after we went to press, but in invitational rehearsals (no sets, no costumes) they looked like winners. Deep enough into the process to start owning their material, far enough from opening night to breathe easy, the performers were blazing with star quality. Noting disarmingly that he is not British and that he has no title, Magee displayed in his songs wittily wicked turns of phrase and a gift for melody in many hummable styles. "I'm poor!" exploded the riveting David Andrew Macdonald as a suddenly penniless playboy. (It does not hurt that he resembles Christopher Reeve.) Ruth Will-



Steel's logo (left) and *The Green Heart*



iamson, the show's Lady Macbeth type, had brass to flatten any Miss Hanagan. At *Steel Pier* a more sophisticated tone prevailed. The brightest gem: "Dance With Me," with Daniel McDonald rhapsodizing in song as Karen Ziemba filled the stage with rhapsodic movement. Count on it to become a classic. —A.B.

SUPER SHAW



Full of ideas, G. B. Shaw

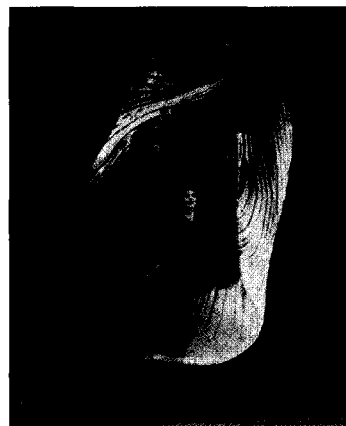
Not much that passes for plot in the four long acts of George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman* is hard to predict. Will a blandly manipulative heiress take to husband the moony lad who puts her on a pedestal or the crackpot ideologue she scares out of his wits? Guess. Few spectators will gasp when a "fallen" young lady proves to be married, or when her spouse's identity is revealed. But Act Three contains an astonishment: a dream sequence so far exceeding any reasonable measure that it can stand alone as *Don Juan in Hell*, a full evening in itself. Alternatively it can be cut altogether. The American Repertory Theatre, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, incorporates the divertimento, thus honoring *Man and Superman* for the whirling Wimbledon of ideas it truly is. The topic: the nature of sexual attraction. (Query: Is Woman "Superman"?) Even so, ART must omit much unactable prose: an "epistle dedicatory," essay-length stage directions, and the scandalous pamphlet "The Revolutionist's Handbook." (May 9-June 8; 617-547-8300.) —A.B.

Austin Baer is a writer based in New York. Nancy Dalva is working on a series of essays on Merce Cunningham.

SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

The Royal Ballet leaves its home at Covent Garden, in London, for a late-month engagement at the Orange County Performing Arts Center, in Costa Mesa, California, bringing two programs. The first bill (May 20, 21, 24, and 25) is a surefire crowd-pleaser in a new and controversial incarnation, the second a dance fanatic's delight. For decades *The Sleeping Beauty* has been the jewel in the Royal's crown, a ballet in which the company seemed instinctively and distinctively at home. However, just as British royalty isn't what it once was, neither is this beautiful ballet, here presented in surreal, Magritte-meets-Louis Quinze decor by Maria Bjørnson, best known for her fog-filled, chandeliered sets for Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber's *The Phantom of the Opera*. She is a designer who sends you home humming the scenery—you will either love what she has done with *Beauty* or think it beastly. Either way, you will see the still wonderful Royal offering a meticulous depiction of the marvelous characters who inhabit this much-loved fairy tale. The company fills it with a roster of internationally renowned stars, both homegrown and

imported, and a tradition that not even the most skewed of productions can conceal. The Royal Ballet's second program, called *A Ravel Evening* (May 22-23), is a quadruple bill. It opens with the 1958 *La Valse*, a tribute to the Viennese waltz by the late Sir Frederick Ashton, Britain's greatest choreographer—indeed, one of this century's greatest. The Royal performs his work with an authority no other company can muster. The evening concludes with Ashton's 1951 setting of *Daphnis and Chloë*, composed by Ravel for Serge Diaghilev in 1912. Slotted between these gems are Kenneth MacMillan's *La Fin du jour*—set to the Piano Concerto in G, and meant to evoke fashionable society of the 1930s—and a setting of the brief and ineffable *Pavane pour une infante défunte* by Christopher Wheel-



A Royal leap

don, a young choreographer who lately has attracted considerable interest and acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. (*A Ravel Evening* will also be presented in New York during The Royal Ballet's appearances at Lincoln Center, July 8-27; 212-875-5928.) For tickets to the Orange County Performing Arts Center events call 714-740-7878. —N.D.

Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG

BELEAGUERED SOULS

Collective Soul plays a radio-friendly brand of rock-and-roll that for some reason is also critic-hostile. Its leader and chief songwriter, Ed Roland, loved Elton John and the Cars in his formative adolescence, and has never renounced those influences for the taboo-tromping of punk rock or postmodern disengagement of the emotions. It almost takes a few months of Zen meditation for the college-educated to figure out Collective Soul: the group plays incredibly catchy riffs because they sound good. A few million music fans agreed about Collective Soul's first two albums, and now the band is back with



Collective Soul (above) and their third album

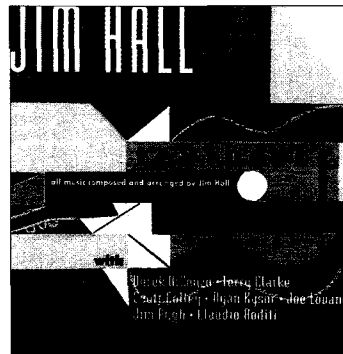
Disciplined Breakdown (Atlantic), which a few million more music fans will likely find agreeable. Where the first two albums were informed by an almost naive idealism (the band members were often accused of being hippies or Christians on a stealth mission into rock-and-roll), the third is informed by a brutal legal battle with the band's former manager (not an uncommon story in the music biz). As Nietzsche once said, that which doesn't kill you makes you stronger, and fighting for freedom, not to mention royalties, has added new dimension to the group both lyrically and musically. Collective Soul still sings about love occasionally, but having been through such a trying time of disillusion, the group also sings about anger and defiance and the joy of freedom. Greater emotional range can only add to its credibility, and makes for a complete as well as catchy listening experience. If a band can still love after spending a couple of years getting knocked around by lawyers, it can claim to know what it's talking about. Call the members sadder but wiser. —C.M.Y.



STILL IMPROVISING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

During a career of more than four decades the legendary jazz guitarist Jim Hall has provided occasional reminders of his conservatory studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Nothing as comprehensive, however, as *Textures* (Telarc), which features seven extended compositions that offer a prime example of concert Hall.

The balance of writing and improvising throughout is exemplary. Hall's work with a ten-piece brass ensemble is especially pungent, glowing on the folklike "Fanfare" and the spry waltz "Reflections." He also recalls Eastern European modalities in his orchestral writing on "Ragman," and jumps into more-abstract terrain with a string quartet on "Quadrologue." There is even a dash of Caribbean whimsy, "Sazanami," built around the steel drummer Derek DiCenzo.



Ryan Kisor, Joe Lovano, and Claudio Roditi are among the other guest soloists, each bringing the right touch to his featured piece. The same can be said seven times over for Hall, who develops his improvisations out of interchanges with the surrounding ensemble. Basic and blues-driven one moment, reminding us that he plays electric guitar the next, Hall encompasses his instrument's history from the seminal modernist Charlie Christian to Bill Frisell and other second-generation disciples of his own.

Hall tends to lead a trio in live performances, whereas his recent Telarc albums emphasize his versatility. The solo *Dedications & Inspirations* and guest-heavy *Dialogues* preceded *Textures*. All three prove that where others look to tribute albums for concepts, Jim Hall can generate more than enough music on his own. —B.B.

CELLISTS WHO REALLY PROVE THEIR METTLE

The deadly-serious alienation that has characterized so much alternative rock and heavy metal had to lift sometime, and sometime appears to be now. The year's not half over, and already we have two of the best musical jokes in decades. First we got Pat Boone's *In a Metal Mood: No More Mr. Nice Guy* (Hip-O), on which the Christian crooner does big-band arrangements of the biggest (and most pagan) hits in the history of metal. And now Apocalyptica delivers *Apocalyptica Plays Metallica by Four Cellos* (Mercury), in which... well, the title explains the situation. These four cello students at the Sibelius Academy, in Helsinki, Finland, decided to expand their repertoire by covering their favorite heavy-metal band. The resulting album is hilarious when you think about where the melo-

dies came from, and strangely moving when you forget. Since the cello is bowed and not strummed, it can never match the breathtaking speed of the electric guitar. Apocalyptica solves this problem by playing Metallica's slowest songs.

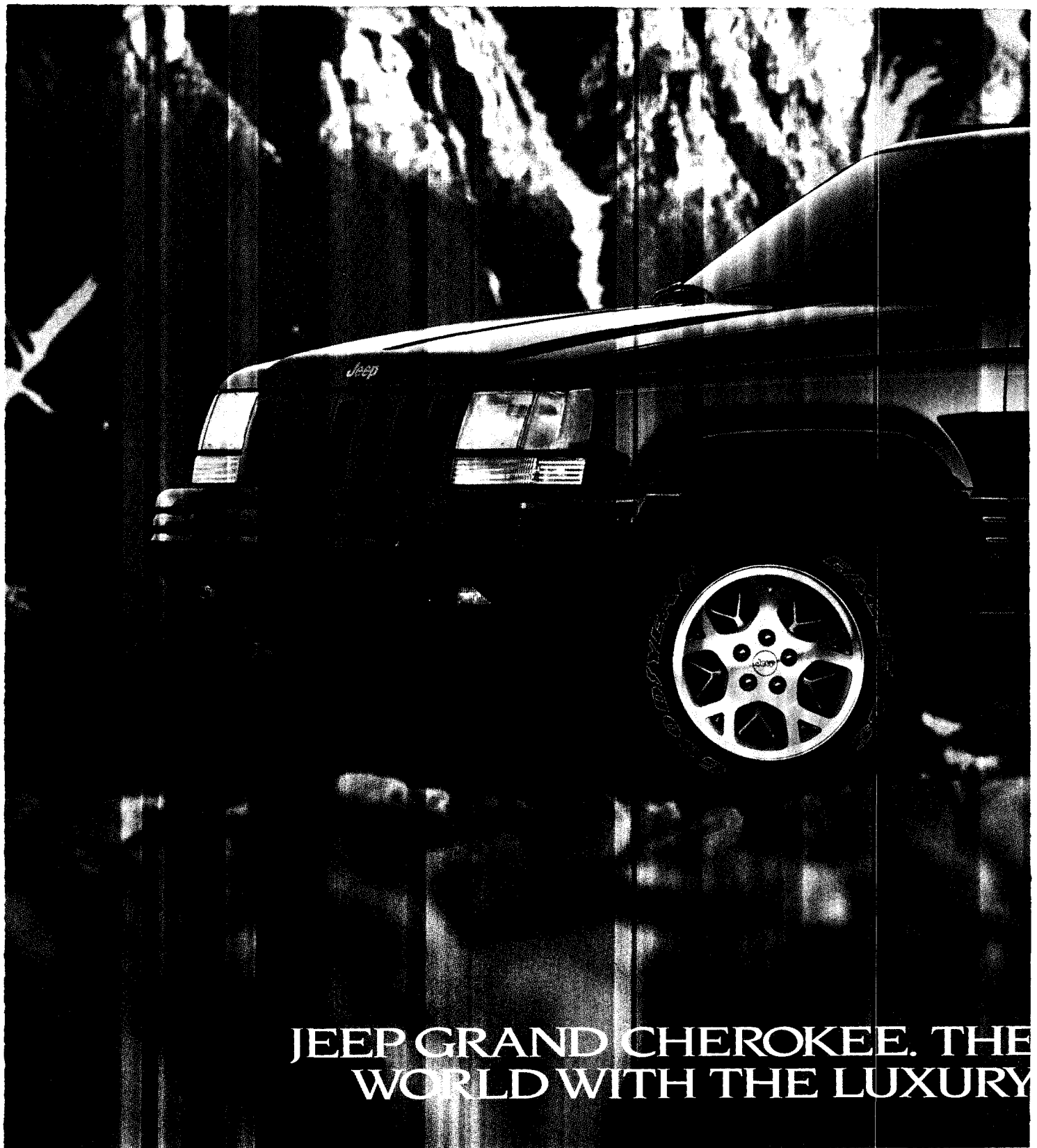


A walk on the dark side: Apocalyptica

Even so, Apocalyptica must have done some serious training to develop the endurance to play these tunes. Not only do the dark melody lines—Metallica sings almost exclusively about death—fit the de profundis emotional range of the cello, but they are explored in new arrangements that the morbid Sibelius himself could have appreciated. —C.M.Y.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for The Boston Globe.

Charles M. Young reviews popular music for Playboy, Musician, and other publications.



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T H E R E ' S O N L Y O N E

Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

GRIM TOWN

Danny Boyle and Andrew MacDonal, who produced *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting*, are making the rounds of Britain's cities, crowning them with their own exuberantly transgressive brand of grunge cinema. This time it's not Edinburgh but Swansea, dubbed by the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas an "ugly, lovely town" and "the graveyard of ambition." First-time director Kevin Allen's Swansea is a graveyard for almost every form of life—poodles, parents, and policemen come to baroquely sticky ends in this rowdy black comedy of revenge among the city's proletarian finest and most profane. If you can survive the serpentine



The grunge-cinema comedy *Twin Town*

plot, in which two young car-stealing brothers (known as "The Twins" even though they're three years apart) seek revenge on a local kingpin for the death of their father on an unsafe construction site, there's poetry in *Twin Town*. Allen's deft, expletive-laden script (co-written with Paul Durden) leans further toward Tarantino than toward any stereotype of Welsh lyricism, and there are more massage parlors and trailer homes than coal miners or daffodils on the mean streets of this city. The effect, as in *Trainspotting*, is an elegantly constructed grossness; the movie's vicious denouement unfolds hand in hand with the delirious beauty of the final scene, in which a massed Welsh choir sings "Myfanwy" beneath a starry sky on a Swansea pier. For all its excess, *Twin Town* offers a more authentic—and more genuinely literary—vision of provincial Britain than any you'll see on PBS of a Sunday night. That's if you can stand the movie's rancid cynicism.

Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.

WHEN LIFE IS THE COAL PITS

Mark Herman's *Brassed Off* is a cheery crowd-pleaser set against the Yorkshire coalpit closures during the Thatcher era. Pete Postlethwaite plays Danny, the devoted leader of a brass band struggling for life while its members struggle with the threat of unemployment. When Gloria (Tara Fitzgerald), the glamorous granddaughter of a former band leader, returns with horn in hand to her home town, she jizzes not only the band but her childhood sweetheart Andy (*Trainspotting*'s Ewan McGregor). They're not as impressed to discover that Gloria works for the British Coal Board. Yet Gloria is less of a class enemy than it seems. Just when things fall apart for everyone, including Danny, who is hospitalized with pneumoconiosis, she finds

a way to ensure the band's comeback. *Brassed Off* is as delightful a celebration of working-class life as it is politically naive. For, as the CEO heedlessly but accurately declares, "coal is history." Thatcher's treachery was not in closing the pits but in failing to create viable alternatives for workers stranded in company towns.



Trying to keep a tune in a dying town

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Never underestimate Austrians. They're not as silly as they sound. They are and they aren't in *Children of the Revolution*, a tragicomedy by Australian filmmaker Peter Duncan about the costs of political blind faith. The movie opens as farce with Judy Davis as Joan, a wild-eyed Commie who, on a trip to Moscow, sleeps with both Stalin (F. Murray Abraham) and Australian double agent "Nine" (Sam Neill) in the

same night. She returns home pregnant, marries her faithful lover Welch (*Shine*'s Geoffrey Rush), and continues to root for Stalin long after he lies dead and disgraced. Raised by Welch and visited by



The mother of the revolution

Nine, Joan's son Joe (played by Ben McLvor as a child, Richard Roxburgh as a grown-up) shows a passion for prisons as a boy and sprouts a bushy moustache and a penchant for paranoid authoritarianism as an adult. When Joe marries a cop (Rachel Griffiths of *Muriel's Wedding*) and rises from prison officers' union rep to government higher-up, more than his mother's heart is broken. *Children of the Revolution* is shot like a documentary but plays as a situation

comedy with an insistent undertone of trouble that erupts into flat-out tragedy. The shift of tone is jarring, but usefully so in underscoring the havoc wrought by evil people and their misguided acolytes. One only wishes that Duncan hadn't conflated doctrinaire communism with all forms of social protest.

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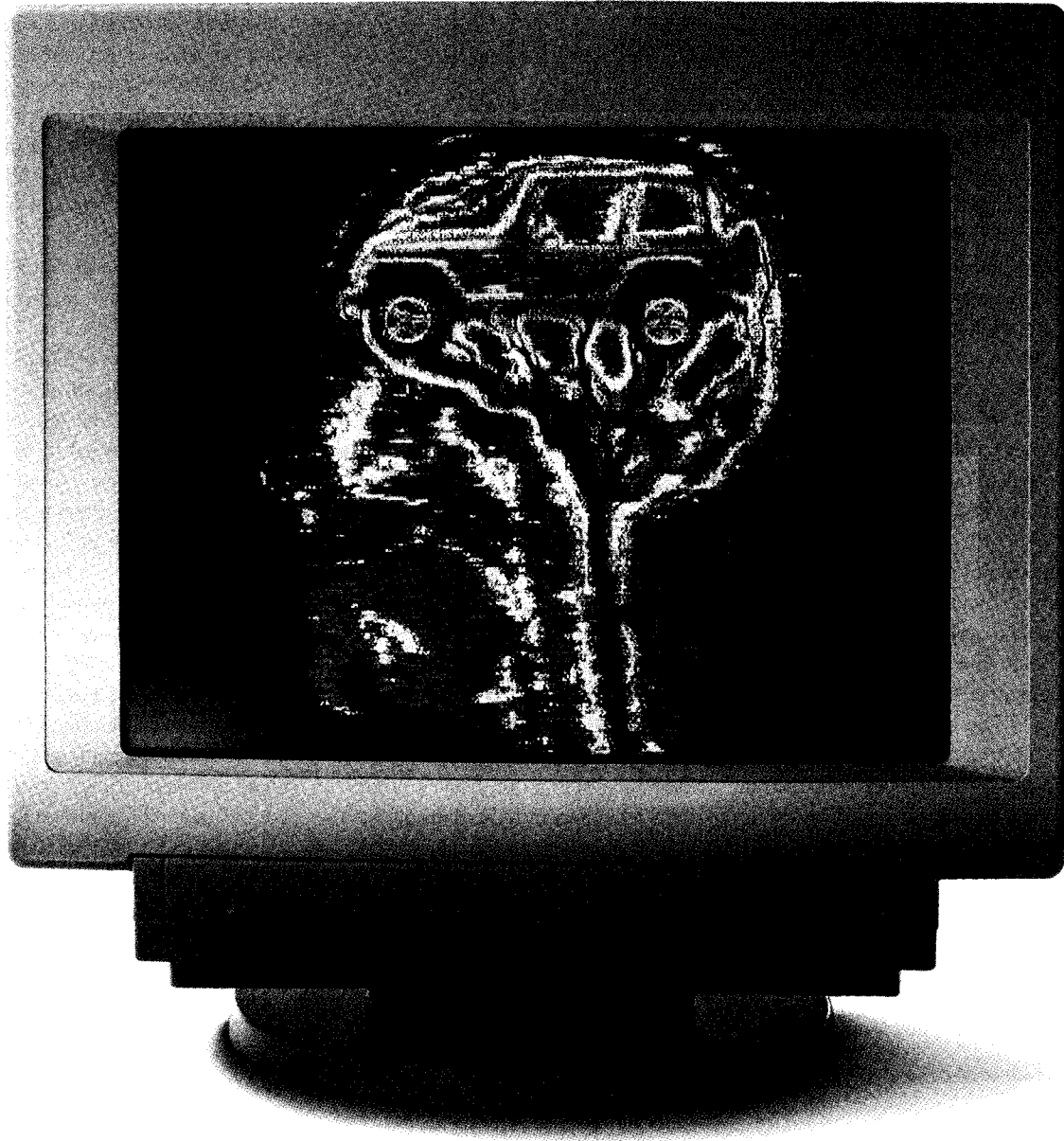
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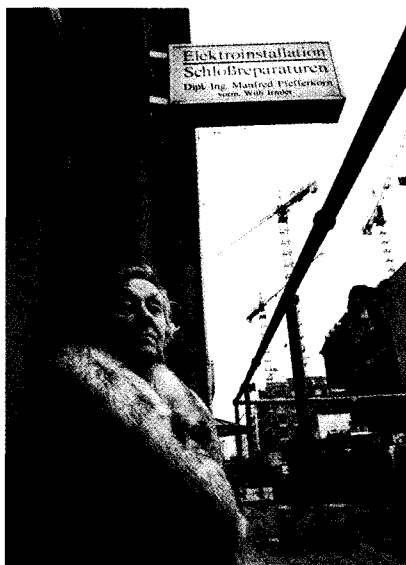
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(Continued from page 28)

what the street had been like before. Frau Irmner had no hesitation. "The best I ever knew it was when I first got here. In the early 1940s we had smart people coming and going, people with class. You didn't even feel the war then."

I tried to picture what sort of people she meant. It was true, Hitler's war had been well under way. In those days, she reminded me, Kronenstrasse ran between Berlin's garment district, now vanished, and the heart of the Nazi Reich. Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda had stood not a hundred yards from where we talked. The place had surely swelled with Nazi might. Just past a church at the end of the block and an expensive hotel had been, Frau Irmner noted, Hitler's chancellery. "All that's gone now, everything," she said with a shrug. From the time the Wall went up, there was silence: "Never a sound, except when something was going on at Checkpoint Charlie." The East Berlin tram and subway, she said, would halt and turn around before reaching her part of the street.

I have grown curious about this block, which is the very start of Kronenstrasse. A year ago, when I began watching it, the south side of the block, across from Pfefferkorn's, had a bombed-out vacant lot at one end and a forlorn Berlin Casino, a bizarre entertainment fling by the DDR's grand vizier, Erich Honecker, at the other. (The casino was not quite ready to open when the Wall fell, and so it never did.) In between were three dilapidated buildings surviving from the 1890s—two of them handsomely baroque and all but abandoned—and a long, low barracks-style shack, also abandoned, which had served as a dormitory for DDR hardhats. There were reasons for the block's eerie air of abandonment. The DDR had all along declined to



Frau Irmner outside Pfefferkorn's

fill in gaps created by wartime bombing or even to repair much of the shell damage left by the hectic passage of the victorious Red Army in 1945; it preferred to house its citizens anew in suburban concrete deserts far from the Wall. The last thing it wanted, once it built the Wall, was to have people hanging around interfering with border guards.

Changes I noticed while spying on the block needed decoding. A pirate used-car dealership festooned with the usual silvery tinsel, meant to dazzle hard-up East Berliners, suddenly disappeared from a bombed site behind the casino. Then a bulldozer came by one day before sunup to flatten the workers' dormitory. Something was afoot. Soon I noticed a sharp reduction in lights burning at No. 3—the one place with a spark of life, a tempestuous building that, Frau Irmner says, used to cater to chauffeur-driven DDR generals responsible for guarding the Wall and shooting people who tried to cross it. The barbershop at street level has loyally retained the old looped DDR lettering on its *FRISEUR* sign, though this is now interlaced with slow-blinking lights announcing the establishment's current role as a late-night hideaway for reunited Berlin's "techno-music" freaks. I'm expecting all those lights to go out in another blink. The need to decode is already past: by last summer redevelopers had reduced Honecker's unopened casino to rubble, and No. 3 could be next. Indeed, the wonder of Kronenstrasse is that post-unification property developers left such a central site alone for so long.

SHORTLY before bulldozers ran amok at the casino, I went to see a judge at Berlin's central administrative court to find out why this tacky oasis survived. She was young and, though not deliberately evasive, seemed bound by rules of secrecy in the matter. It turns out that since unification this block of Kronenstrasse has been a battleground of claims from former owners (more than 200,000 separate claims have been made on property in the Mitte district alone). The judge declined to say more except that residents of Kronenstrasse, with its commercial location and proximity to the garment district, had been predominantly Jewish until the 1930s. Despite her reticence she was revealing about Berlin. Her toenails, I could not help noting, were painted green (sultry weather had put the whole town in sandals). She, too, seemed to be part of the Berlin that risked being smoothed out. My bet was that there would be nothing so alternative peeping from beneath the robes of her successor. Also, she delivered a final judgment that proved to be unerring: I needed to go, she said, to the Stasi.

The old East German secret police are (more or less) out of business now, but the judge directed me to a place that had been one of their administrative centers, in Berlin's charmless eastern suburbs. Under its corrugated tin roof the present city authorities were temporarily storing property records relating to the Mitte district. Instead of opening citizens' private mail and tapping their phones, the center's personnel had turned to digging out dusty deeds for lawyers to poke through. A former Stasi secretary—a stout woman in a sky-blue T-shirt with the sequined motif *MADISON AVENUE* glittering on her bosom—pulled out the files on Nos. 1–14 Kronenstrasse at my request. That took in the entire south side of the block.

It is hard to imagine the block as those deeds show it to have been. From the 1890s to the early 1930s it was a thriving concourse of merchants and lawyers. Its glovemakers and furriers advertised retail outlets in London, Amsterdam, and Vienna. On the corner that became Erich Honecker's casino—that-never-was stood a smart food house named Aschinger's. From the turn of the century the Fleischmanns owned an apparel factory at No. 10, the Reichsteins a trading house at No. 11. I imagined those

"German history is my enemy," Heiner Müller would say, "and I want to stare into the white of its eye."

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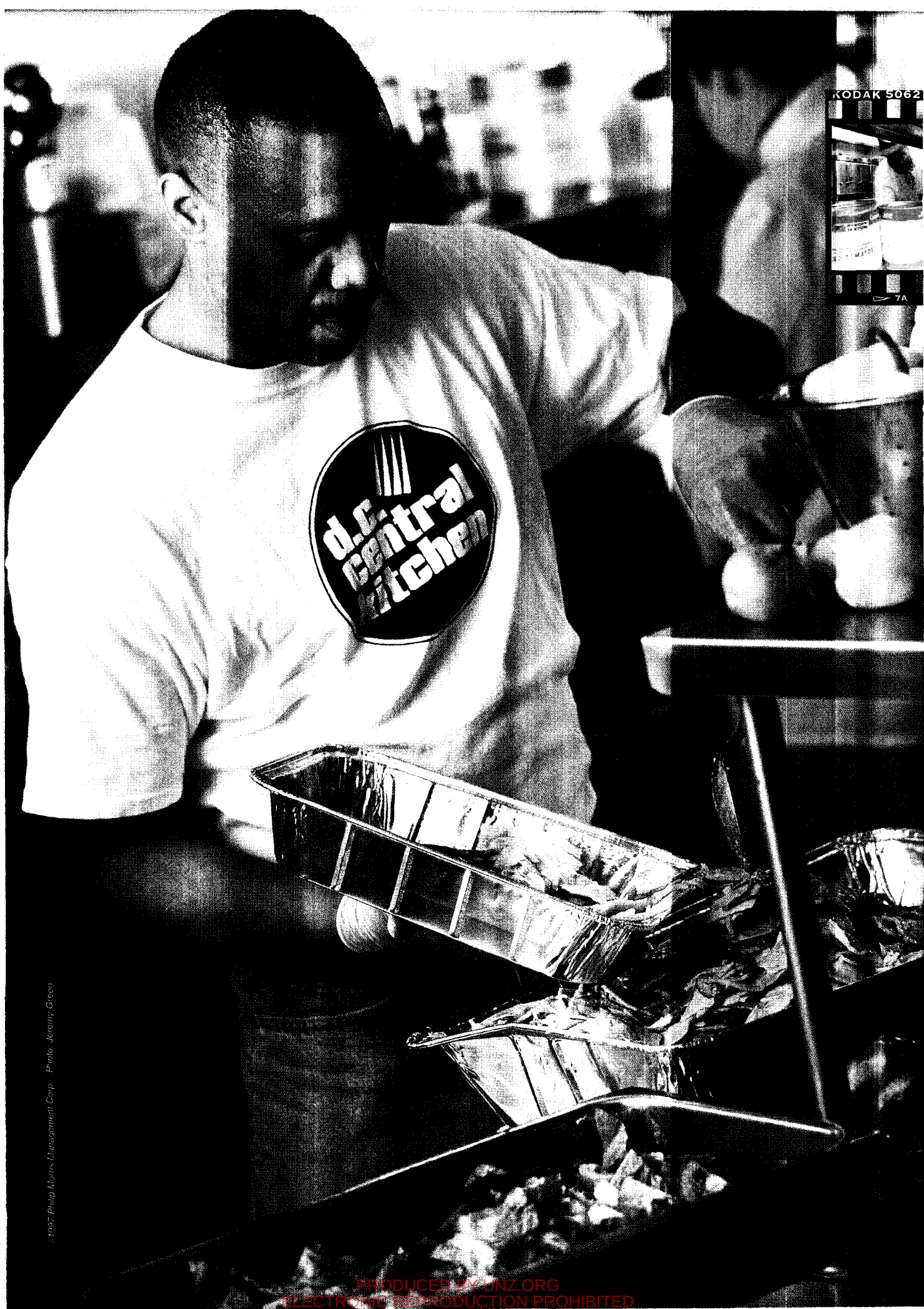
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swirling Berlin street scenes painted by Ernst Kirchner and the German Expressionists, with black-coated gents in tall black hats and women with feathered hats and tapering noses.

Starting in 1936 the Nazi authorities dispossessed the owners of most of the buildings on the block. Swastikas ran across the deeds, with the stamp "EINGANG!" (to signify that the Nazis had broken into the building and would brook no dispute) followed by "Property of the German Reich." No. 6 became a Nazi police office; other buildings were sold at auction to banks. No. 10 passed into the hands of I. G. Farben, the chemicals giant that produced poison gas for the extermination camp at Auschwitz.

Then the Russians took over. From war's end until 1949 the Soviet sector confiscated property at four of the fourteen addresses, whether they were in

passed during Hitler's time into the hands of German banks and insurance companies. Soon after the DDR came into being, in 1949, the Russian solution was generalized. From about 1951 onward, culminating in 1961, when the Wall went up, deeds of ownership on the entire block bore the definitive DDR stamp: "EIGENTUM DES VOLKES" ("Property of the People").

So there was nothing to prevent Erich Honecker from indulging his fancy for a casino. By that time, the mid-1980s, he had come around to encouraging construction in the hitherto forbidden vicinity of the Wall. His regime, unaware that its end was nigh, conceived it as a "house of entertainment." The man Honecker groomed to succeed him, Egon Krenz, disowns the demolished attraction. "I can't tell you anything about it," he groused in response to my telephone inquiry. "I have no interest in casinos. Where is it?" Well, Krenz has other things on his mind. He is still seeking to block his endless trial with other DDR bosses on charges related to the killing of more than 600 Easterners who attempted to escape across the fences that his regime erected. But the casino was real, all right. Its purpose was to impress foreign diplomats and well-heeled Westerners who came through Checkpoint Charlie, and then to milk them for the hard currency the DDR always needed.

Christian Schmidt, who was the casino's construction manager, retains a certain respect for the building. Though largely made of the square prefabricated concrete slabs that typify DDR construction, it had a shining glass façade and some unlikely decor inside. "It was an honor to build, after the *Sputnik* housing estates I did out in the suburbs," Schmidt says. Gracing its interior were Indian marble, crystal mirrors, and stone mosaics—materials that DDR builders seldom got to use. Finishing touches were still lacking when both the nearby Wall and Erich Honecker fell, but the casino was nonetheless completed. Schmidt says he resumed work when the deutschmark came east, six months later: "I had a job to finish and I wanted to get paid for it." He was paid—in deutschmarks—through the public agency that the Bonn government set up to sell off firms and property in the East. Schmidt may be the only person to have cashed in chips at the casino—

though I hoped, after hearing his account of the interior, that the Polish hardhats who demolished it at least made off with some of the Indian marble.

THE Bonn government's sell-off agency has finished Kronenstrasse. The side of the block I spied on is almost entirely in the hands of two large German investors: an insurance group and a property developer. They acquired the block partly through the sell-off agency but mainly from pre-war private owners who regained title to their property and then sold it. The owners' heirs don't seem to want to come back and live here; they prefer America, long their home. The new corporate owners are faceless, and their looming invisibility creates a certain tension. Kronenstrasse gulps before the unknown. Its only survivors who can count on participating in what lies in store are the baroque characters at Nos. 10 and 11, respectively the building that I. G. Farben haunts and its rococo neighbor, which seems to have become a sort of post office. (The last piece of correspondence I saw pinned to its door said, in English, "Hi, Eddy. Report at once. Very important. Come by at all costs. Otherwise.") Berlin has placed this pair of buildings on its monument protection list—the sole guarantee against demolition in a city where promoters have the upper hand. There is no law requiring developers to keep intact anything that does not appear on the list, and the list itself stops well short of including all pre-war architecture or even turn-of-the-century architecture. The quirky *FRISEUR* at No. 3 is still in peril.

Kronenstrasse, then, will be sharpening up for the return to Berlin of the German government. The developers' plans call for a huge new office building in black glass enveloping the casino end of the block, incorporating Nos. 10 and 11, and an even larger diplomatic center covering the rest of what used to be Nos. 1–14. The idea behind the diplomatic compound is to provide embassy quarters for countries not large or rich enough to have separate embassies. So Frau Irmeler may soon get to hobnob with the fancy dressers again. With envoys from the South Seas and Ruritania. People with class. It looks like a glamorous revival for the block. But not much for the likes of Heiner Müller to stare at. ☼

*Each day in Berlin one
finds oneself losing
touch a little more with
all that has gone on
there before.*

ruins or not, in particular under what it called List-I regulations, which were directed against war criminals and Nazism's mentors. In 1943 the brewery Schultheiss, today headquartered in Dortmund, had bought the bombed ruins of Aschinger's at No. 14, only to be dispossessed under List-I—as was I. G. Farben, four doors away. The former chemicals giant, incidentally, refuses to die. It has been in liquidation for decades, in part to enable it to pay compensation to people it used for slave labor, but its officials, encouraged by shareholders, still seek to retrieve a host of properties in the former East Germany—No. 10 Kronenstrasse included. A series of court rulings have denied I. G. Farben's claims, but the skeleton company bearing its name lives in hope.

At two other addresses on the block the Russians, striking out at the capitalist foe, expropriated property that had



So Long to Bad Dogs

Animal behaviorism is an infant science, but it has dramatically changed the way many dog owners understand their animals

MANY years ago we had a dog who at age four announced her fear of thunder by trying to launch herself through a second-story window. Over the next eight years her phobia intensified, so that a darkening sky, a backfiring car, or the hum of a distant power saw would send her into

by **Mark Derr**

jaw-jiggling, saliva-raining frenzy. She demolished doors, tile floors, windows, and the interiors of cars. Veterinarians we consulted recommended tranquilizers; distracting her with play, obedience drills, or music; or confinement—ineffectual advice still commonly given to dog owners with fractious pets. Unless

we were willing to use them around the clock, tranquilizers were useless. She could focus on nothing but her fear; she ignored music and destroyed a chain-link kennel. She was our albatross, and she was finally euthanized when old age and her phobias left her unable to function.

In recent years animal behaviorists have theorized that thunderphobia arises from a hearing impairment, a trauma, or a biochemical imbalance. Nicholas Dodman, the head of the behavior clinic at the Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, speculates in *The Dog Who Loved Too Much* (1996), his collection of case studies, that dogs who fear thunder somehow become charged with static electricity. He prescribes the anti-anxiety medication BuSpar (buspirone), desensitization to the sound of thunder, and “measures to prevent static electrical charge buildup.” But no one is certain of the cause of the problem, and no one has a foolproof treatment.

BuSpar takes weeks to become effective in people or dogs, if it works at all, and desensitization is an art that few dog specialists have mastered. One who has is Peter Borchelt, an applied animal behaviorist in New York City, who says, “Dogs are good at localizing sound and will learn it’s not from a storm if you use just a tape or CD and standard speakers.” Deploying customized sound systems, he can help many thunderphobic dogs, but only before their fear is transmogrified.

Dodman and Borchelt belong to a small but growing band of animal-behavior therapists, who in just two decades have achieved notable results in treating phobias, anxiety, aggression, panic and obsessive-compulsive disorders, and other conditions leading to the destruction of property, self-inflicted injury, disrupted lives, or attacks on other animals and people. Moreover, in focusing on the dog as a sentient being who exists with its own behaviors, predilections, and perceptions in a human society, they have contributed to a dramatic shift in the way people train and relate to their animals.

Notwithstanding those accomplishments, the young science, which covers both domestic and wild animals, is troubled. The field is divided between veterinary behaviorists, like Dodman, and ap-

plied animal behaviorists, usually ethologists or, like Borchelt, psychologists. While their goals are essentially the same, the two groups frequently disagree about terminology, diagnoses, and treatments, which remain experimental. More troublesome, demand for behavioral therapy, fueled in part by media reports and Dodman's book, has outstripped the availability of certified practitioners, who number fewer than forty nationwide.

For years veterinary schools ignored behaviorism, and even today fewer than a third of the nation's twenty-seven veterinary schools have behavioral clinics, meaning that most veterinarians continue to have little or no training in the field. Absent mandatory licensing, unqualified practitioners—generally dog trainers—are advertising expertise in behavior modification to meet the demand. Too often, for fees that can reach \$75 an hour, they offer inappropriate, even wrong advice to pet owners who believe that they have consulted a certified professional. Most advice columns, books on raising and training dogs, and postings on the Internet also offer erroneous advice. "The field is growing but not with sufficient competence and training to back it up," says Karen Overall, the director of the behavior clinic at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, where a dog owner might have to wait up to five months for an appointment.

ESSENTIALLY, "training" is the process of getting a dog to perform tasks on cue; "behavior" is the way the dog acts. "Most of us want basic training and good citizenship for dogs, and most dogs can figure out the rules and contingencies to live with people," Peter Borchelt says. "Those who can't read the cues, or for whom the rules are confused, or who have their own rules or have anxiety, are the problem dogs."

Many dogs engage in normal but undesirable behavior—jumping, barking excessively, soiling the house, making sexual displays toward people, or hyperactivity, for example. These "management problems," as they are known, can be addressed through training, which is why some trainers boast of expertise as "behaviorists." But if ignored or handled with abuse, these problems can turn serious.

By a rough estimate, severe problems arising from aggression, phobias, anxiety, and other conditions afflict up to 20 percent of the 52 to 57 million dogs in American households. "The dogs I see are abnormal," says Overall, an ethologist and a veterinarian. "And many things that people try in order to rectify the problem make it worse, or even actively encourage it."

I once heard of a woman who bought as a pet a six-month-old Alaskan husky considered an unlikely prospect for racing. After observing the dog tremble when doors blew shut in the wind, she decided it was noiseophobic and tied it to a doorjamb for four hours while she opened and slammed the door. Released, the dog went wild and nearly destroyed the woman's house. When the appalled breeder arrived to rescue the dog, she asked where the woman had gotten such an idea. "From a book that tells you how to desensitize your dog," the woman replied. The husky became an excellent sled dog, but it is shy of strangers.

The costs to human beings and dogs of untreated behavioral problems are immeasurable. Countless owners become virtual prisoners of their pets, afraid to leave them alone or to touch them. Property damage and veterinary and medical bills can run into tens of thousands of dollars. Many dogs are abused, neglected, or killed outright. Each year four million are abandoned to animal shelters, a large proportion for misbehavior ranging from rambunctiousness to biting. Of those, 2.4 million are euthanized. Dog bites—the true measure of aggression—average more than four million a year, with about twelve resulting in the victim's death and about 750,000 requiring medical attention. Four out of five attacks are against neighbors or members of the owner's family.

Responding to the assaults and lurid news reports, a number of local governments have since the late 1980s banned pit bulls and other breeds deemed vicious. Owners of killer dogs have occasionally been imprisoned for manslaughter, and civil judgments for serious attacks have reached \$2 million. A few judges have sent dogs to behaviorists for evaluation before sentencing. Calling bites an "unrecognized epidemic," Randall Lockwood, an animal behaviorist with the Humane Society of the United

States, says they are largely avoidable through education, better breeding and socialization of dogs, and laws that hold owners responsible. Like most behaviorists, Lockwood argues that breed-specific ordinances fail to control dangerous dogs; the legislation, like the purchase of protection dogs, is based on the illusion that all members of a breed behave in a uniform, genetically programmed way.

In fact behavior is not uniform within breeds, and any dog can bite. Moreover, aggression—technically, behavior related to hunting, defense, and dominance and subordination—is not synonymous with viciousness. Aggression that expresses itself as boldness and assertiveness in seeking and capturing objects (popularly called "prey drive") is desirable in working dogs, although not in family pets.

Nonetheless, *USA Today* reported in 1995 that 38 percent of Americans had dogs because of their fear of crime. Many of those animals came from traditional "guarding" or "protection" breeds—akita, chow chow, Doberman pinscher, German shepherd, mastiff, Malinois, and Rottweiler. Properly bred, socialized, and trained, these dogs can be model citizens. But as a result of inbreeding and overbreeding to meet rising demand, many are showing up with extreme forms of aggression and fearfulness, which some owners encourage with abusive training and rough play. Not surprisingly, purebred dogs and intact males are disproportionately represented among those with aggression problems, which usually emerge between eighteen months and three years of age—adolescence to young adulthood.

Poor breeding practices have also produced lines of show dogs with extreme dominance aggression, primarily English springer spaniels, cocker spaniels, bull terriers, and golden retrievers. Dogs with this condition, called rage syndrome and associated with epilepsy by some researchers, albeit without hard evidence, attack their owners without apparent provocation or warning.

Aggression, whether it is expressed through territorial defense, possessiveness around food or toys, fighting with other dogs, predation, or attempts to dominate members of the human family, is the problem behaviorists are most frequently asked to treat. Many dogs are aggressive out of fear. Anxiety and pho-

bias are the next most common. Sometimes the conditions are knotted together. "Dominance aggression, fear, and anxiety are related," Karen Overall says, "but the behaviors are different, and we want to modify behavior." She urges owners to seek assistance at the first sign of unusual or threatening behavior.

TYPICALLY, a behaviorist begins with a case history, including details of the dog's genealogy, upbringing, behavior, and training; videotapes and personal observation when necessary; and a physical examination to look for medical conditions associated with a number of problems—thyroid dysfunction with aggression in young dogs, for example. After addressing any physical causes, the therapist designs a program to modify the problem behavior and to teach owners and their dogs the cues and rules that will make living together more bearable. The program may include counterconditioning and desensitization to stimuli that frighten or arouse the dog. Occasionally trainers are recommended, but the goal is to teach the owner to teach the dog through consis-

tency and rewards. Some dogs are put on low-protein diets to reduce their energy levels; others are neutered.

Compliance with the program is not automatic. People are slow to alter their habits and harder to train than dogs. Indeed, some family members actively resist the program. Overall recalls an older couple who sought treatment for their German shepherd, a fear biter who guarded their store. During the consultation the woman became frightened that the dog would lose its aggressiveness and cease to protect her, and she refused to proceed.

To break through the established responses of dogs with severe problems, many behaviorists employ medication, especially from among the drugs developed during the past decade for treating depression and anxiety in human beings. Prozac helps with aggression arising from serotonin imbalances, for example, and Xanax, according to Overall, "shatters anxiety." (By law only veterinarians can prescribe medication, so applied animal behaviorists work with them in such cases.) But these drugs are expensive, and the few scientific studies that have

been conducted suggest that they are effective only about half the time, perhaps because the drug therapies are experimental and many practicing veterinarians do not know what dosages to prescribe.

Behaviorists estimate that they help the dogs' owners in 50 to 60 percent of cases of extreme phobia or severe separation anxiety, and in 75 to 90 percent of cases of aggression. People grant their dogs a lot of leeway, Borchelt says, and success doesn't necessarily mean anything more than a perceived change for the better. Sometimes the dog and its owners need a divorce, and in cases of extreme aggression euthanasia may be the only option. Some behaviorists refuse to treat a dog they consider to be a threat to life. "I don't think we cure anything," Overall says. "We control behavior."

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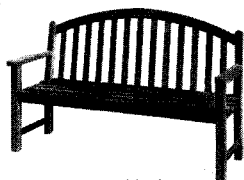
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standing performances from even the most retiring and timid dogs. In a sense, animal behaviorists are moving to expand and systematize that intuitive understanding, but much about the species' behavior is unknown. The last comprehensive study was concluded more than thirty years ago, when John Paul Scott and John L. Fuller published their seminal work *Genetics and the Social Behavior of the Dog* (1965), establishing critical socialization periods for puppies and laying out parameters of canine behavior. Since then researchers have made progress in particular areas without deciphering the complex relationship between nature and nurture.

What is now clear is that genes lay down the basic blueprint for each dog, including a predisposition toward certain complex behaviors, such as retrieving and herding, and temperaments, such as fearfulness and sociability. But environmental factors as disparate as the health and diet of the mother during pregnancy, conditions at birth, the mother's temperament, diet after weaning, trauma and illness the dog might suffer, and the attention it receives from its human breeder have a tremendous and lasting effect on a dog's development. The human beings who adopt a puppy also have a dramatic impact, because dogs do not mature fully until they are two to three years old. That is why "puppy tests" designed to predict a dog's personality and abilities are largely useless. It is also why differences in behavior and temperament between littermates are usually more striking than differences between breeds.

Early and consistent socialization to human beings and to other dogs is crucial to a puppy's mental and emotional growth. Puppies not socialized to people between their sixth and twelfth weeks—the majority from pet stores and commercial breeders—often become fearful, aggressive, phobic, or anxious, as do many of those who suffer serious early illness or trauma. Dogs left alone for long periods, and those with constant human companionship, are prone to separation anxiety, as are those rescued from shelters.

Fear, aggression, panic and obsessive-compulsive disorders, phobias, and anxiety also have genetic components, especially among purebred dogs. "There are

a lot of lines with naturally occurring strangeness," Borchelt says. When a dog is used to produce multiple litters, various of its attributes enter the gene pool repeatedly. Inbreeding fixes those traits, including physical and behavioral problems, and overbreeding guarantees their wide distribution. The only way to avoid buying a dog produced through these practices, common in the show world, is to check its genealogy, observe its parents, and steer clear of commercial breeders and pet stores. Ethical breeders do not mate dogs who have problems.

WITH purebred dogs routinely costing \$500 to \$1,000 (more for "trained" animals), people are reluctant to give up on a pet, and since sloppy breeding practices seem certain to continue, many owners are likely to need assistance. But finding it is not always easy. The American College of Veterinary Behavior certifies veterinary behaviorists, and the Animal Behavior Society certifies ethologists and psychologists specializing in dogs and cats, who must have masters' or doctoral degrees. The Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors, based in Great Britain, also has several members in the United States. These organizations are the only ones currently setting standards of education, research, and clinical experience for practitioners. Nationally, only fourteen veterinarians, in eight clinics associated with veterinary schools or in private practice, are board-certified for behavioral work, along with approximately twenty-five applied animal behaviorists. Trainers are not required to be certified, and no regulation prevents any of them from calling themselves behaviorists.

Ideally, breeders would produce the healthiest dogs they can, veterinarians would work with qualified trainers (preferably certified by a national agency, much the way water-safety instructors now are by the Red Cross) to teach owners how to train and live with those dogs, and specialists would be called in to help with severe behavioral problems. But for now, absent sound advice from their veterinarians, people seeking assistance should call the veterinary school nearest them and ask for a referral. With persistence and some creative treatments, the thunder in the sky will stop reverberating through the dog. ☼

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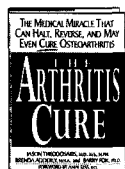
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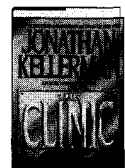
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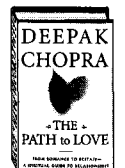
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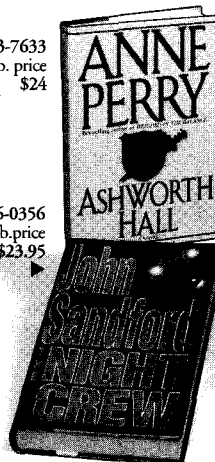


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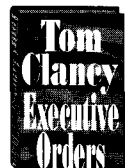


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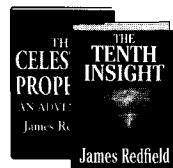
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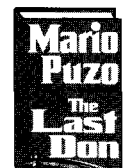
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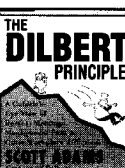
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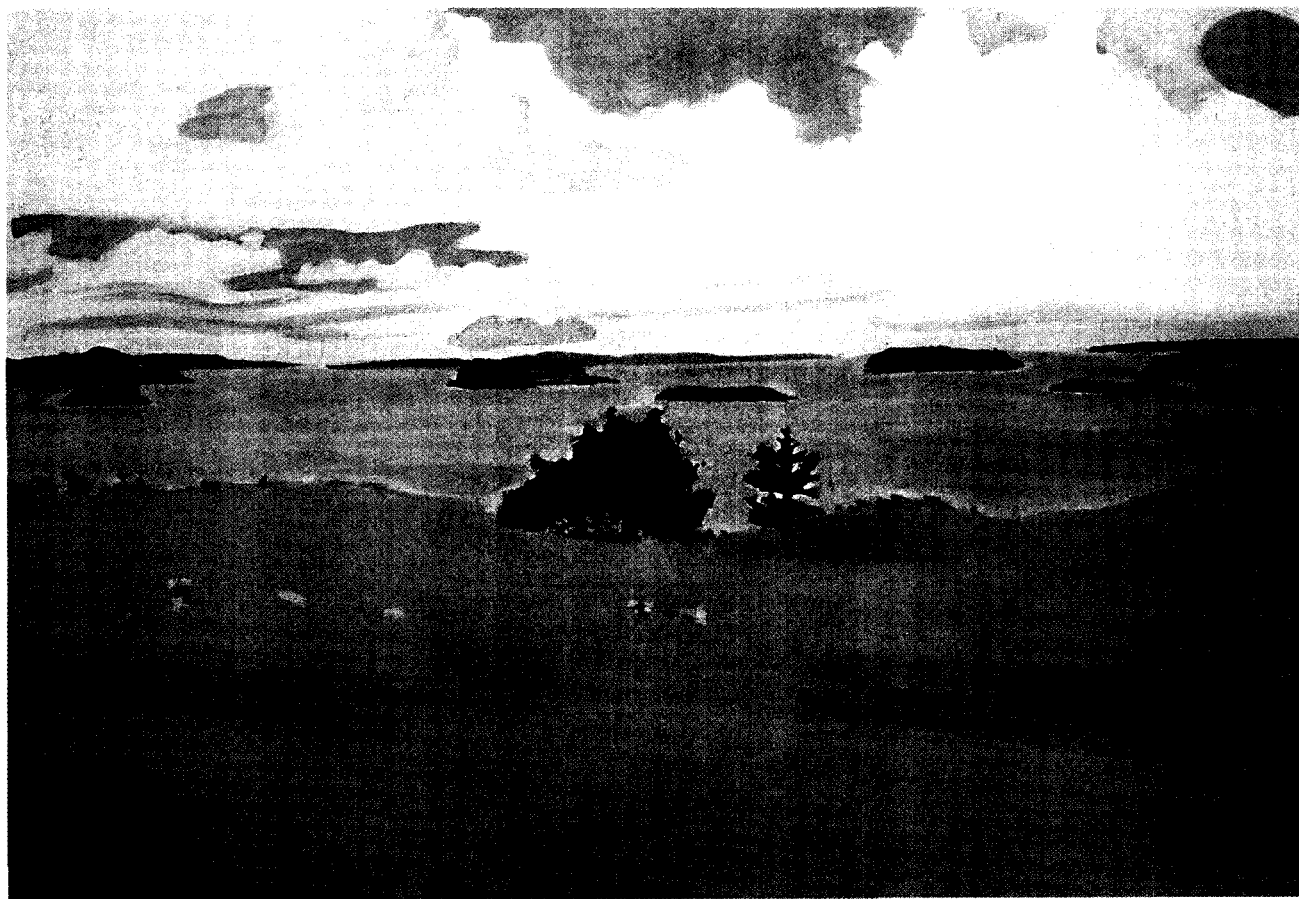
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Off the Maine Coast

*The island as foreign
country; the vacationer as
admiring expat*

WE sever most of our ties when we set out for an island, leaving them to be healed after we return. Yet even while we're away, we are not altogether willing to abandon our umbilical connections to the mother continent. What is the mystery of the navel?

There seems always to

be a larger crowd at the island end of a ferry run than at its mainland end. The busiest, most intense location on any island is the ferry landing, with its raucous comings and goings. The world-weary ferrymen try to look as though they've

seen everything; the arriving passengers are keeping their eyes peeled for newness; and the departing passengers look chastened at the thought of resuming life.

We mainlanders who love islands are only amateurs, enthusiasts, self-elected temporary Crusoes. As

a young man, I wrote poems to explore the romance of islands, announcing their paradox in a book called *The City and the Island*: "Halfway between the city and the island I / Am bound for the city." My prediction was, alas, accurate, but I have never lost my taste for isolation.

When my wife and I landed last July on Vinalhaven, a large island in Maine's Penobscot Bay, after a seventy-five-minute ferry trip from Rockland, I was yet again discovering a foreign country. When we departed, only ten days later, I was cheerfully saying "so long" to a familiar realm where I flattered myself I might easily qualify as a naturalized citizen. This harbor, that headland, house, or boathouse, its purpose and its neighborhood, was now known to me. I knew something about the island's seals, its wild mushrooms, its lobsters, its landscape, and its history; I had swum in its abandoned quarries full of fresh water and had tumbled under its chilly and regenerative surf.

I spent my island time idly, listening to the huge eleven-foot-high tides bubble and trickle away across mud flats and observing a tentative raccoon tiptoe out to teach her kits how to dig clams and sea

**Penobscot Bay With Yellow Field,
oil on canvas, 1968,
Fairfield Porter**

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worms while the cove was empty. I was surprised at high water when an unsuspected canoe or silent yacht crept up on me as I sunbathed naked. I bristled when teenagers, in their appetite for speed and excitement and boom-box music, revved outboards to a shriek. But human contact, whether terrestrial or maritime, seems of marginal relevance at sunrise over a fjord while a lobster boat chugs hoarsely and dependably out to sea to "haul," or at sunset when the falling light is punctuated by the homeward wing-beats of an osprey screaming to her mate.

What is there to *do* on a mere island? The most noticeable quality out there is the silence—a silence broken by bird-call, breeze-hiss in the firs, or the indoors whicker of the refrigerator. The sun, when it's out, sparkles like fireflies on the ripples. There are roads and trails to be walked, empty houses to inspect, landscape to be sorted out, trespassing to do: What sort of house is that in the neighboring cove, with its red boats stowed under blue-plastic tarpaulins? Didn't I see a jungle of skunk cabbage down that dirt road, or a telltale smear of orange, implying chanterelles to be gathered? Isn't there an art auction in town this afternoon to benefit the brave summer gallery? Today looks like the day to visit the tide race and watch harbor seals as they frolic and vault. Or to rent a bicycle and explore another back road. Or to watch my fellow tourists explore the causeway that forms the main street of Carver's Harbor, tides rushing back and

Or maybe not. As I slip down through the fog to the barnacled rocks and collect a pail of mussels for dinner, to be steamed with wine and seaweed on the stove of our rented house, or walk "downstreet" to buy a take-out pint of fish chowder at the welcoming window of the Harbor Gawker, in Carver's Harbor, or sit down to a slab of grilled swordfish at the Sand Dollar, the fir trees are impossible to forget: all week they have been bordering, punctuating, and feathering what my eyes grab for close up, flavoring and rustling the air currents that enliven my flesh in these cool-warm summer seaside airs.

Yesterday we set out on an exploratory walk along a half-abandoned woods road where, half a century ago, trucks or carts hauled pulpwood to be skidded offshore onto boats. Now the road is lined with a swath of scrawny green replacements and straggling rows of volunteer white birches where the slash was abandoned. After a mile we found the forest suddenly richer in texture, studded with stands of locust under whose nitrogen-fixing umbrella tall green grasses grow, and soon we were stumbling through unmistakable traces of former human habitation: smothers of lily of the valley, Monarch-butterfly-tempting milkweed, runaway expeditions of household brambles and perennial gardens that had transgressed their borders. Eventually we were bound to arrive at a well cover or a cellar hole. The largest of these islands have all been populated over and over again, with limited success, but most have declined in year-round population during the twentieth century.

WHEN Sarah Orne Jewett's touching stories from *The Country of the Pointed Firs* were published in these pages, in the 1890s, the islands were passing their point of maximum residency—at least by males. ("She had lived to lament three seafaring husbands, and her house was decorated with West Indian curiosities, specimens of conch shells and fine coral which they had brought home from their voyages in lumber-laden ships.")

Fishermen still handlined under sail for haddock and cod in waters that floated a considerable traffic of boats carrying



Beach Flowers No. 2, oil on canvas, 1972, Fairfield Porter

provisions for the mainland. Ships were laden with granite quarried on Vinal-haven for city buildings like the U.S. Customs House in New York and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine—stone blasted from the island's giant quarries in a day when its population was double the present winter load. Other ships and boats were laden with sheep and cattle that had been fattened on the grassy pastures of North Haven or Monhegan or even smaller, uninhabited islands where the herds were left alone to graze all summer unmolested by mainland predators. Later, when the October grass withered, these four-footed islanders would sail for slaughter in Boston.

In Jewett's time the curve was already falling fast. The toll of the sea meant that many sailors would never come home, leaving their women isolated as widows, teachers, solitaires. The railroads had compromised sea transportation, rendering it less economic; the forests that had once crowded the islands had been felled for shipbuilding or firewood or pulp; the house-building boom on the mainland had moved west, out of the range of maritime traffic; the granite trade was about to bow its head to King Concrete; and the fisheries that had first brought men and women to the islands of Maine from across the Atlantic were

Paintings on this page: Estate of E. B. Noyce at the Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Maine



Monhegan Island, oil on canvas, 1938, Jan Marinus Domela

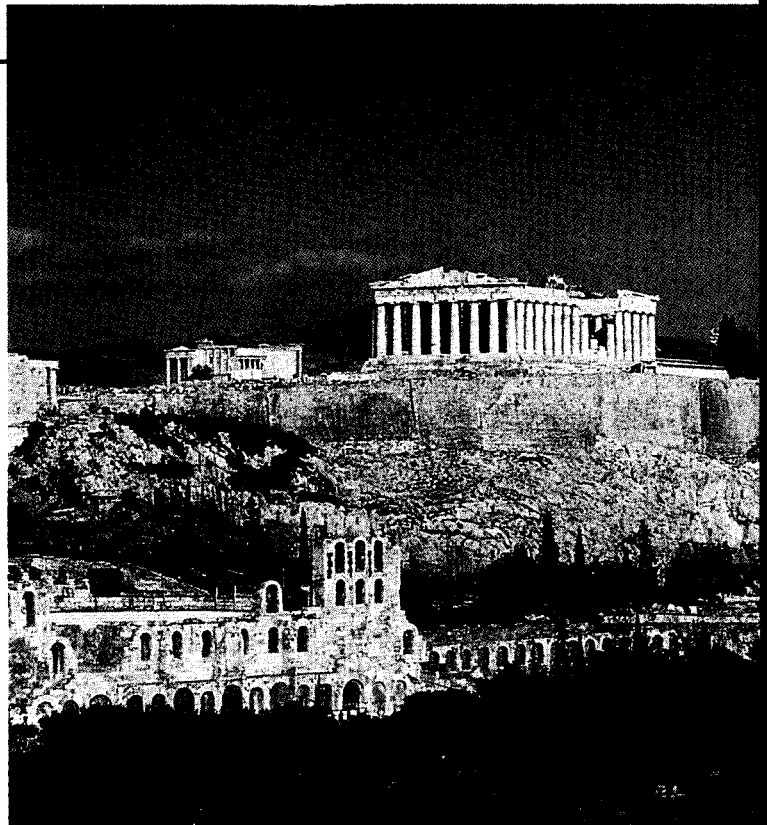
forth underfoot, and test the brave but spartan shops doing their best to keep up with their summer traffic.

specimens of conch shells and fine coral which they had brought home from their voyages in lumber-laden ships.")

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surrendering the silent graces of sail to the harrumph and huff-puff of the gasoline engine, eventually enabling fish from the vast offshore treasuries of Georges Bank and the Grand Banks to be delivered promptly, fresh on ice, to Boston or New York without the season-consuming necessity of salting and drying. By the time of my first island visits, in the 1960s, groundfish had long since begun to yield to the gnarly lobster, which before the Civil War was widely regarded as offal, fit only for enriching lime-poor soils. By a convenient combination of miracles lobster has metamorphosed into a delicacy in the age of Surf 'n' Turf. Ingenious islanders figured if they could succeed for a while as cod-fish salters, lumberjacks, quarrymen, shepherds, or sailmasters, why not as lobstermen? So the sea blooms with lobster pots in the summer months, and in trying winters the hardworking lobster people betake themselves to Jupiter, Florida, and like havens to relax their aching, well-paid bodies and forget fog for a while.

Just as the internal-combustion engine brought island ports closer to the workplaces and schools of the Atlantic coast, it narrowed the distance between workers on the mainland and potential playgrounds offshore. Island settlements could now import provisions and off-load their natural resources with greater ease, and this meant that the tourist countercharge could gather its forces in readiness for the mild months of school vacation. The tourists came at first by steamer from Boston to Portland, Rockland, and Bar Harbor, whence they caught ferries to the outer islands; later by train; increasingly by private yacht, Veblenian vessels that plied eastward after Memorial Day and westward after Labor Day; and, finally and nowadays overwhelmingly, by car to the ferry docks.

Delighted tourists and leisure-time sailors bought abandoned shorefront land dirt cheap from the farmers and shepherds who could no longer find a market for their stock. Du Ponts, Cabots, and others built themselves grand bungalows on North Haven and Isleboro; Rockefellers erected granite piles along the cliffs of Mount Desert Island; Porters built eccentric frame houses on Great Spruce Head. Day-sailing magnates

bought old sea captains' mansions in Camden or Castine and moored their own boats below in the harbor for island picnics or outings.

On less glamorous coasts the fishermen of Swans Island, Grand Manan, and Deer Isle hunkered down while a burgeoning population of artists, beginning with Thomas Cole and Fitz Hugh Lane on Mount Desert, and Rockwell Kent and N. C. Wyeth on ancient Monhegan (where in 1609 Captain John Smith had planted a garden), scanned and limned the surf, the rocks, the light.

No two islands, of course, followed the same historical path, but the entire archipelago rode at its moorings off the coast like a flotilla at anchor. The hawsers always must lead to and from a home port on the mainland. The towns of Rockland, Rockport, and Camden, each in a different style, served as strategic centers for the islands of Penobscot Bay: supply depots for the transport of mainland goods islandward, receiving stations for loads of pulpwood or granite or lobster to be trucked inland once the marine traffic ceased to serve, and eventually, of course, staging areas for herds of tourists. Today, for example, the Garbo Lobster Company has established itself conveniently with poles at Vinalhaven, Maine, and Stonington, Connecticut, and eighteen-wheelers traffic almost daily over the 300 miles between, which nowadays can be traversed more easily by land than by water.

TO participate, however vicariously, in the life of the islands means that a visitor needs a motel, an inn, a bed-and-breakfast, a campground, or other rental space. The summer folk who now own island property usually cannot spend whole summers there, so it turns out to be relatively easy, if not always cheap, to rent a seaside house by the week or the month. Most of these arrangements are made directly with the owners, because most of the real-estate agencies concentrate on sales. But Vinalhaven Rentals (207-863-2241) can find you houses of varying capacity and elegance for \$500 to \$1,500 a week, which may prove more economical for a family than a B&B. In our effort to penetrate the past my wife and I found through friends a Vinalhaven house to rent so idyllic and isolated as

not to be believed. On our reluctant return to the mainland, for experimental contrast we located the Windward House Bed and Breakfast, in Camden, a comfortable and very careful bed-and-breakfast run by an assiduous Ottawa couple, situated on the heavily trafficked artery of Route 1 a few easily walkable blocks from the luxurious shopping of Camden's downtown.

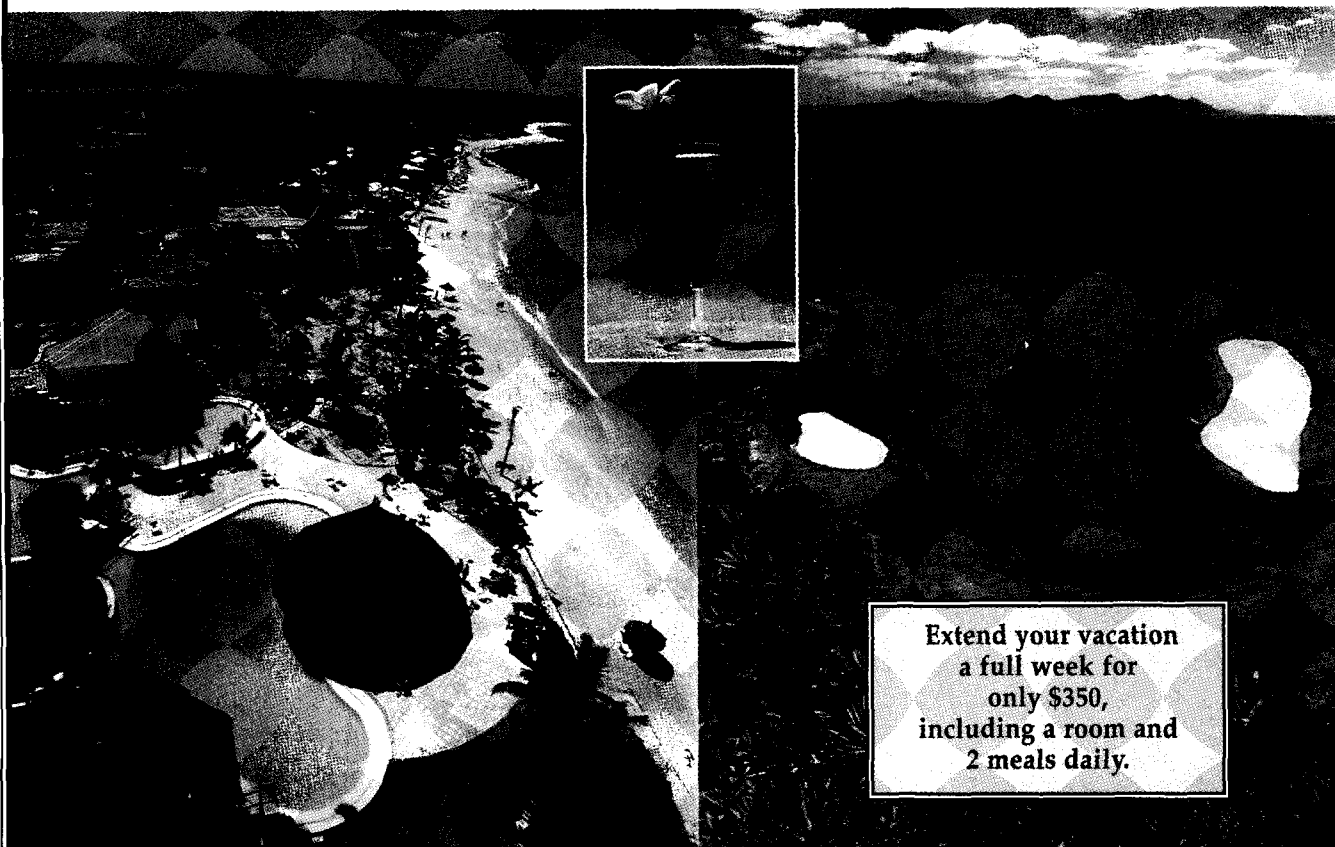
Coming back to the mainland coast for several days before returning home is a little like making a stopover to reduce jet lag after a time-machine trip. Camden seethes with people in shorts and sneakers who come (by car, bus, bicycle, or boat) to admire the boats. Its main street is a shopping haven, with antiques, gifts, upscale clothing, bookstores, coffee bars, and a bewildering variety of restaurants. It looks landward to a sleek gathering of church spires, a particularly well-sited and elegant public library, an impressive collection of private gardens, and the tempting lakes and other destinations of the Camden Hills, where one can conveniently drive or bike in order to hike or swim at places with names like Shirttail Point and Pitcher Pond.

But by no stretch of the imagination can one imagine Camden as it might have been in Jewett's day, even though the mainland harbor she described as "Dunnet Landing" was not so different from the islands as we see them today.

One evening in June, a single passenger landed upon the steamboat wharf. The tide was high, there was a fine crowd of spectators, and the younger portion of the company followed her with subdued excitement up the narrow street of the salt-aired, white-clapboarded little town.

Jewett's protagonist was lucky enough to rent herself a little white schoolhouse as a studio—for fifty cents a week. Present-day Maine islands take you a step toward the Arcadian past; toward sprinkles of white houses among the dark trees, yards bursting in summer with day-lily colors, soothed and gentled by the fog; toward coasts flickering with flights of guillemots skittering across the waters with a flash of white in their black wings. The wholeness of the past, or what is left of it for us to relive, is one of the likeliest and most enlivening of destinations. ☘

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MY RACE PROBLEM— AND OURS

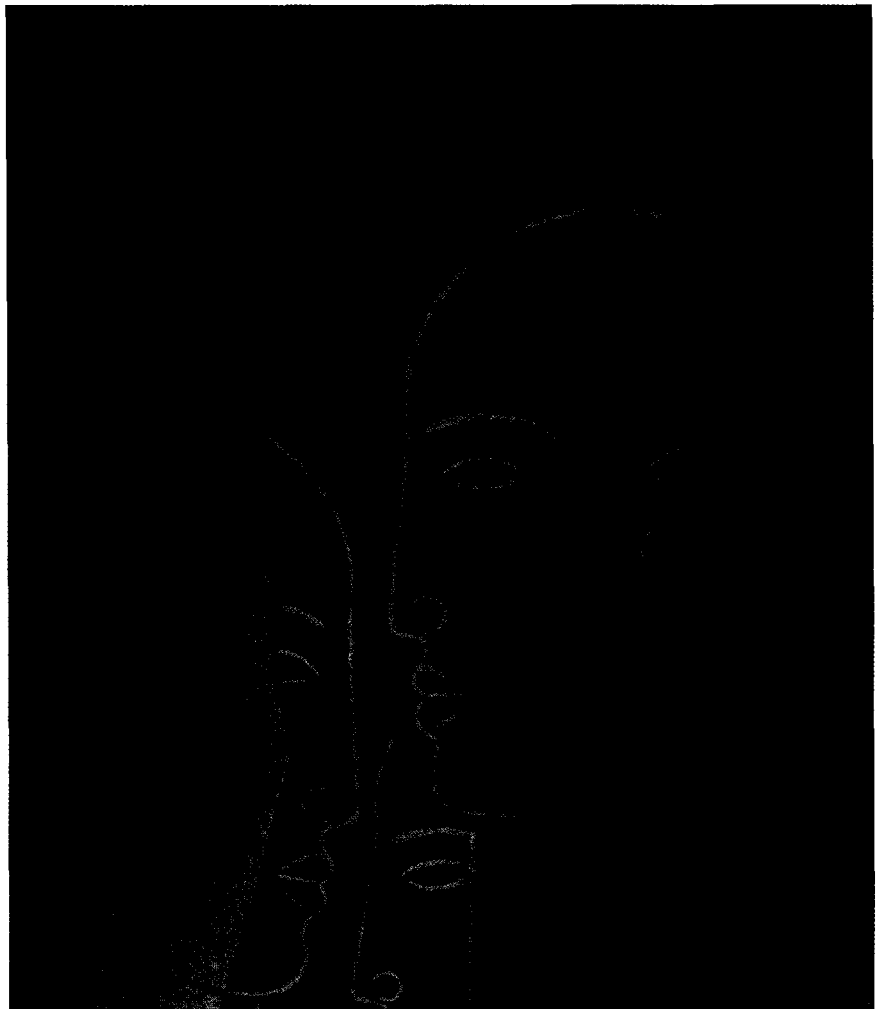
by RANDALL KENNEDY

WHAT is the proper role of race in determining how I, an American black, should feel toward others? One response is that although I should not dislike people because of their race, there is nothing wrong with having a special—a *racial*—affection for other black people. Indeed, many would go further and maintain that something would be wrong with me if I did not sense and express racial pride, racial kinship, racial patriotism, racial loyalty, racial solidarity—synonyms for that amalgam of belief, intuition, and commitment that manifests itself when blacks treat blacks with more solicitude than they do those who are not black.

Some conduct animated by these sentiments has blended into the background of daily routine, as when blacks who are strangers nonetheless speak to each other—

“Hello,” “Hey,” “Yo”—or hug or give each other a soul handshake or refer to each other as “brother” or “sister.” Other manifestations are more dramatic. For example, the Million Man March, which brought at least 500,000 black men to Washington, D.C., in 1995, was a demonstration predicated on the notion that blackness gives rise to racial obligation and that black people should have a special, closer, more affectionate relationship with their fellow blacks than with others in America’s diverse society.

I reject this response to the question. Neither racial pride nor racial kinship offers guidance that is intellectually, morally, or politically satisfactory.



RACIAL PRIDE

I ESCHEW racial pride because of my conception of what should properly be the object of pride for an individual: something that he or she has accomplished. I can feel pride in a good deed I have done or a good effort I have made. I cannot feel pride in some state of affairs that is independent of my contribution to it. The color of my skin, the width of my nose, the texture of my hair, and the various other signs that prompt people to label me black constitute such a state of affairs. I did not achieve my racial designation. It was something I inherited—like my nationality and socio-economic starting place and sex—and therefore something I should not feel proud of or be credited with. In taking this position I follow Frederick Douglass, the great nineteenth-century reformer, who declared that “the only excuse for pride in individuals . . . is in the fact of their own achievements.” If the sun has created curled hair and tanned skin, Douglass observed, “let the sun be proud of its achievement.”

It is understandable why people have often made inherited group status an honorific credential. Personal achievement is difficult to attain, and the lack of it often leaves a vacuum that racial pride can easily fill. Thus even if a person has little to show for himself, racial pride gives him status.

But maybe I am misconstruing what people mean by racial pride; perhaps it means simply that one is unashamed of one's race. To that I have no objection. No one should be ashamed of the labeling by which she or he is racially categorized, because no one chooses her or his parents or the signs by which society describes and sorts people. For this very same reason, however, no one should congratulate herself on her race insofar as it is merely an accident of birth.

I suspect, however, that when most black people embrace the term “racial pride,” they mean more than that they are unembarrassed by their race. They mean, echoing Marcus Garvey, that “to be [black] is no disgrace, but an honor.” Thus when James Brown sings “Say It Loud—I'm Black and I'm Proud,” he is heard by many blacks as expressing not just the absence of shame but delight and assertiveness in valuing a racial designation that has long been stigmatized in America.

There is an important virtue in this assertion of the value of black life. It combats something still eminently in need of challenge: the assumption that because of their race black people are stupid, ugly, and low, and that because of their race white people are smart, beautiful, and righteous. But within some of the forms that this assertiveness has taken are important vices—including the belief that because of racial kinship blacks ought to value blacks more highly than others.

RACIAL KINSHIP

I REJECT the notion of racial kinship. I do so in order to avoid its burdens and to be free to claim what the distinguished political theorist Michael Sandel labels “the unencumbered self.” The unencumbered self is free and independent, “unencumbered by aims and attachments it does not choose for itself,” Sandel writes. “Freed from the sanctions of custom and tradition and inherited status, unbound by moral ties antecedent to choice, the self is installed as sovereign, cast as the author of the only obligations that constrain.” Sandel believes that the unencumbered self is an illusion and that the yearning for it is a manifestation of a shallow liberalism that “cannot account for certain moral and political obligations that we commonly recognize, even prize”—“obligations of solidarity, religious duties, and other moral ties that may claim us for reasons unrelated to a choice,” which are “indispensable aspects of our moral and political experience.” Sandel's objection to those who, like me, seek the unencumbered self is that they fail to appreciate loyalties and responsibilities that should be accorded moral force partly because they influence our identity, such that living by these attachments “is inseparable from understanding ourselves as the particular persons we are—as members of this family or city or nation or people, as bearers of that history, as citizens of this republic.”

I admire Sandel's work and have learned much from it. But a major weakness in it is a conflation of “is” and “ought.” Sandel privileges what exists and has existed so much that his deference to tradition lapses into historical determinism. He faults the model of the unencumbered self because, he says, it cannot account for feelings of solidarity and loyalty that most people have not chosen to impose upon themselves but that they cherish nonetheless. This represents a fault, however, only if we believe that the unchosen attachments Sandel celebrates should be accorded moral weight. I am not prepared to do that simply on the basis that such attachments exist, have long existed, and are passionately felt. Feelings of primordial attachment often represent mere prejudice or superstition, a hangover of the childhood socialization from which many people never recover.

One defense of racial kinship takes the shape of an analogy between race and family. This position was strikingly advanced by the nineteenth-century black-nationalist intellectual Alexander Crummell, who asserted that “a race *is* a family,” that “race feeling, like the family feeling, is of divine origin,” and that the extinction of race feeling is thus—fortunately, in his view—just as impossible as the extinction of family feeling.

Analogizing race to family is a potent rhetorical move used to challenge those who, like me, are animated by a liberal, individualistic, and universalistic ethos that is skeptical of, if not hostile to, the particularisms—national, ethnic, re-

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makes me
eat a bug?

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sick of all the
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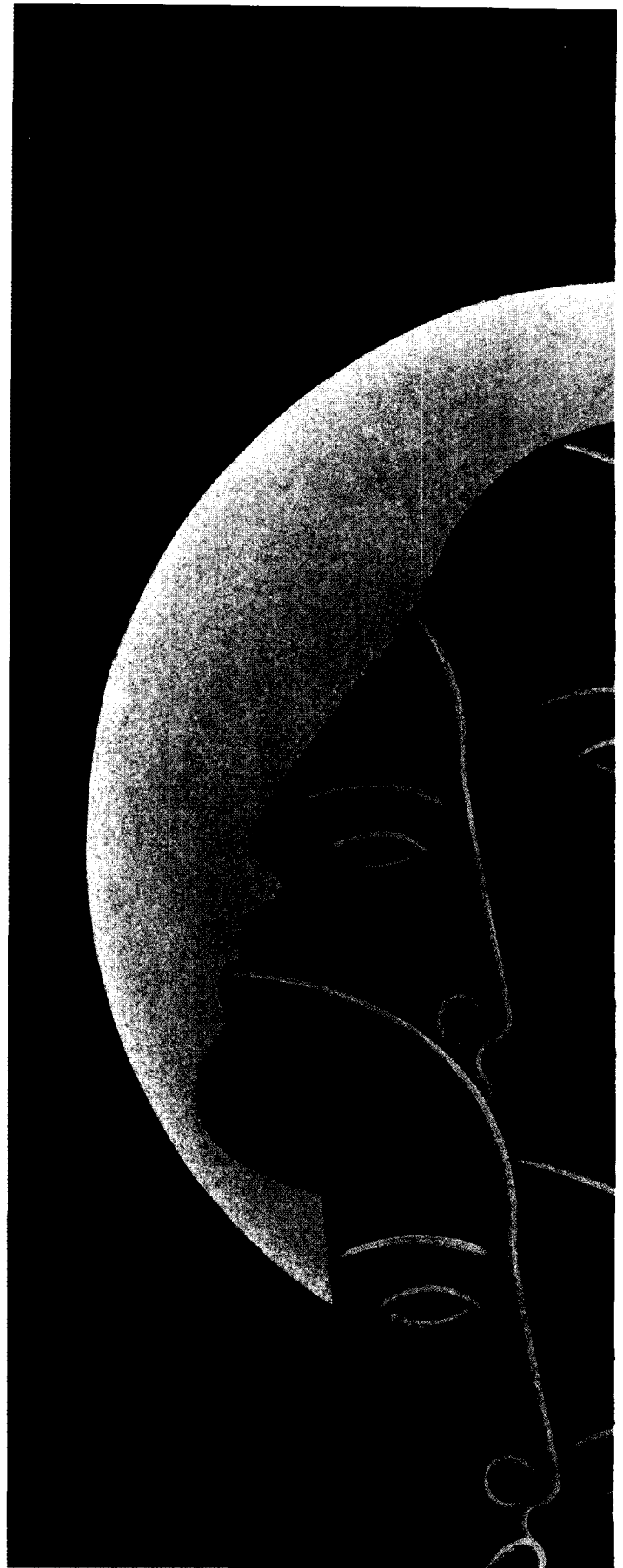
ligious, and racial—that seem to have grown so strong recently, even in arenas, such as major cosmopolitan universities, where one might have expected their demise. The central point of the challenge is to suggest that the norms I embrace will, or at least should, wobble and collapse in the face of claims on familial loyalty. Blood, as they say, is thicker than water.

One way to deal with the race-family analogy is to question its aptness on the grounds that a race is so much more populous than what is commonly thought of as a family that race cannot give rise to the same, or even similar, feelings of loyalty. When we think of a family, we think of a small, close-knit association of people who grow to know one another intimately over time. A race, in contrast, is a conglomeration of strangers. Black men at the Million Man March assuredly called one another brothers. But if certain questions were posed (“Would you be willing to lend a hundred dollars to this brother, or donate a kidney to that one?”), it would have quickly become clear that many, if not most, of those “brothers” perceived one another as strangers—not so distant as whites, perhaps, but strangers nonetheless.

However, I do not want to rest my argument here. Rather, I want to accept the race-family analogy in order to strengthen my attack on assumptions that privilege status-driven loyalties (the loyalties of blood) over chosen loyalties (the loyalties of will). In my view, many people, including legislators and judges, make far too much of blood ties in derogation of ties created by loving effort.

A vivid illustration is provided by the following kind of child-custody decision. It involves a child who has been separated from her parents and placed with adults who assume the role of foster parents. These adults nurture her, come to love her, and ultimately seek legally to become her new parents. If the “blood” parents of the child do not interfere, the foster parents will have a good chance of doing this. If, however, the blood parents say they want “their” child back, authorities in many jurisdictions will privilege the blood connection and return the child—even if the initial separation is mainly attributable to the fault of the blood parents, even if the child has been with the foster parents for a long time and is prospering under their care, even if the child views the foster parents as her parents and wants to stay with them, and even if there is good reason to believe that the foster parents will provide a more secure home setting than the child’s blood parents. Judges make such rulings in large part because they reflect the idolatry of “blood,” which is an ideological cousin to the racial beliefs I oppose.

Am I saying that, morally, blood ties are an insufficient, indeed bad, basis for preferring one’s genetic relatives to others? Yes. I will rightly give the only life jacket on the



...ship offer no guidance that



sinking ship to my mother as opposed to your mother, because I love my mother (or at least I love her more than yours). I love my mother, however, not because of a genetic tie but because over time she has done countless things that make me want to love her. She took care of me when I could not take care of myself. She encouraged me. She provided for my future by taking me to the doctor when appropriate, disciplining me, giving me advice, paying for my education. I love her, too, because of qualities I have seen her exhibit in interactions with others—my father, my brother, my sister, neighbors, colleagues, adversaries. The biological connection helped to create the framework in which I have been able to see and experience her lovable qualities. But it is deeds, not blood—doing, not being—that is the morally appropriate basis for my preference for my mother over all other mothers in the world.

SOLIDARITY WITH VIOLA LIUZZO

SOME contend, though, that “doing” is what lies at the foundation of black racial kinship—that the reason one should feel morally compelled by virtue of one’s blackness to have and show racial solidarity toward other blacks is that preceding generations of black people did things animated by racial loyalty which now benefit all black people. These advocates would contend that the benefits bestowed—for instance, *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and affirmative-action programs—impose upon blacks correlative racial obligations. That is what many are getting at when they say that all blacks, but particularly affluent ones, have a racial obligation to “give back” to the black community.

I agree that one should be grateful to those who have waged struggles for racial justice, sometimes at tremendous sacrifice. But why should my gratitude be racially bounded? Elijah Lovejoy, a white man murdered in Alton, Illinois, in 1837 for advocating the abolition of slavery, participated just as fervently in that great crusade as any person of my hue. The same could be said of scores of other white abolitionists. Coming closer to our time, not only courageous black people, such as Medgar Evers, Vernon Dahmer, and James Chaney, fought white supremacy in the shadow of death during the struggle for civil rights in the Deep South. White people like James Reeb and Viola Liuzzo were there too, as were Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner. Against this history I see no reason why paying homage to the struggle for racial justice and endeavoring to continue that struggle must entail any sort of racially stratified loyalty. Indeed, this history suggests the opposite.

is intellectually, morally, or politically satisfactory.

“ONE’S PEOPLE”

THUS far I have mainly argued that a black person should not feel morally bound to experience and show racial kinship with other blacks. But what do I say to a person who is considering whether to *choose* to embrace racial kinship?

One person who has made this choice is Stephen L. Carter, a professor at Yale Law School and a well-known author. In a contribution to an anthology titled *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, Carter writes about his racial love for black people, declaring at one point that “to love one’s people is to crave a kind of familyhood with them.” Carter observes that this feeling of racial kinship influences his life concretely, affecting the way in which he values people’s opinions of him. “The good opinions of black people . . . matter to me more,” he writes, than the good opinions of white people. “That is my choice, and I cannot imagine ever making another.” In *Reflections of an Affirmative Action Baby*, Carter gives another example of how racial kinship affects his life.

Each December, my wife and I host a holiday dessert for the black students at the Yale Law School. . . . our hope is to provide for the students an opportunity to unwind, to escape, to renew themselves, to chat, to argue, to complain—in short, to relax. For my wife and myself, the par-

ty is a chance to get to know some of the people who will lead black America (and white America, too) into the twenty-first century. But more than that, we feel a deep emotional connection to them, through our blackness: we look at their youthful, enthusiastic faces and see ourselves. There is something affirming about the occasion—for them, we hope, but certainly for us. It is a reminder of the bright and supportive side of solidarity.

I contend that in the mind, heart, and soul of a teacher there should be no stratification of students such that a teacher feels closer to certain pupils than to others on grounds of racial kinship. No teacher should view certain students as his racial “brothers and sisters” while viewing others as, well, mere students. Every student should be free of the worry that because of race, he or she will have less opportunity to benefit from what a teacher has to offer.

Friends with whom I have debated these matters object to my position, charging that I pay insufficient attention to the complexity of the identities and roles that individuals assume in society, and that I thus ignore or minimize the ability of a black professor to be both a good teacher who serves all his students well *and* a good racial patriot who feels a special, racial affection for fellow blacks. These friends assert that I have no valid basis for complaint so long as the professor in his official duties is evenhanded in his treatment of students. By “official duties” they mean his conduct in the classroom, his accessibility during office

THE EMBRACE

You weren’t well or really ill yet either;
just a little tired, your handsomeness
tinged by grief or anticipation, which brought
to your face a thoughtful, deepening grace.

I didn’t for a moment doubt you were dead.
I knew that to be true still, even in the dream.
You’d been out—at work maybe?—
having a good day, almost energetic.

We seemed to be moving from some old house
where we’d lived, boxes everywhere, things
in disarray: that was the *story* of my dream,
but even asleep I was shocked out of narrative

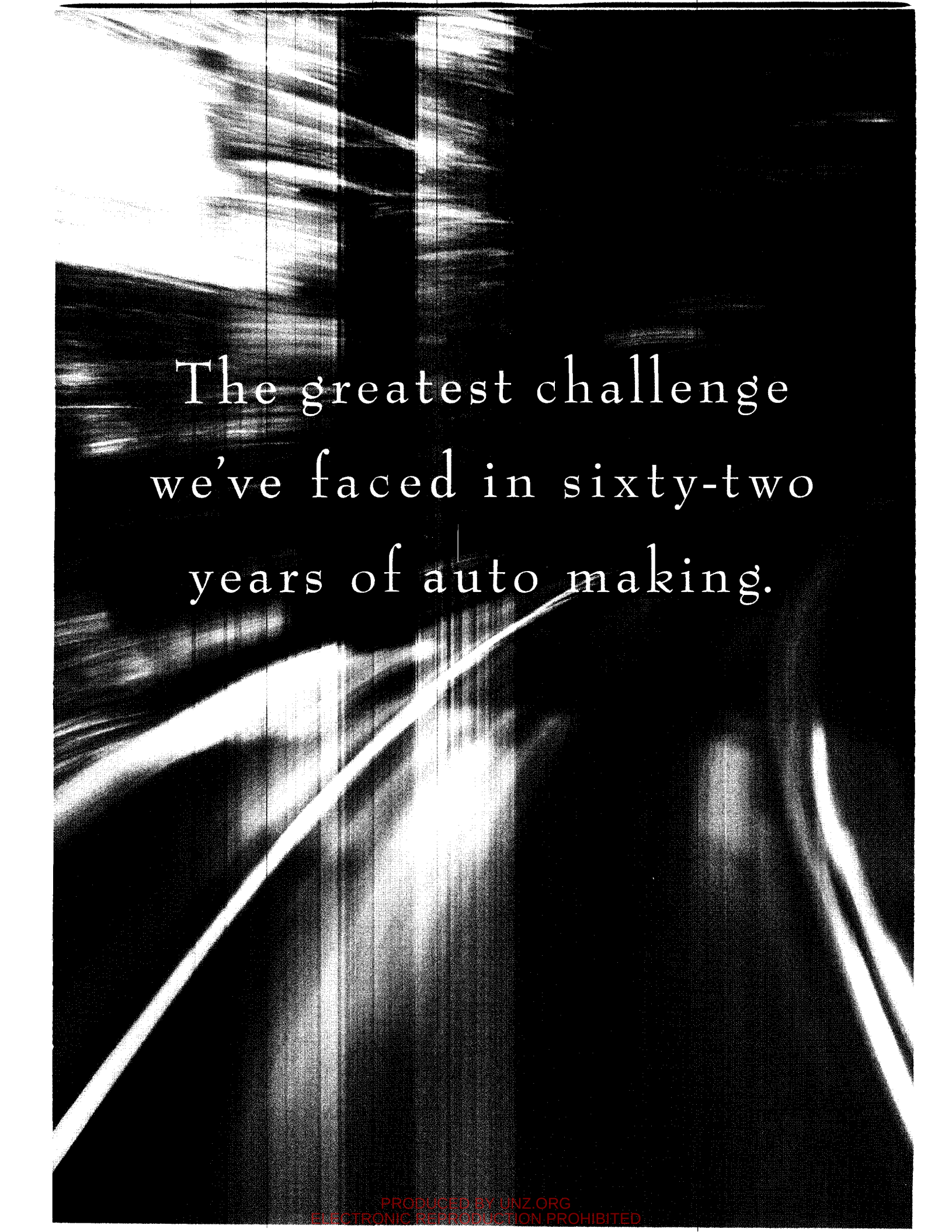
by your face, the physical fact of your face:
inches from mine, smooth-shaven, loving, alert.

Why so difficult, remembering the actual look
of you? Without a photograph, without strain?

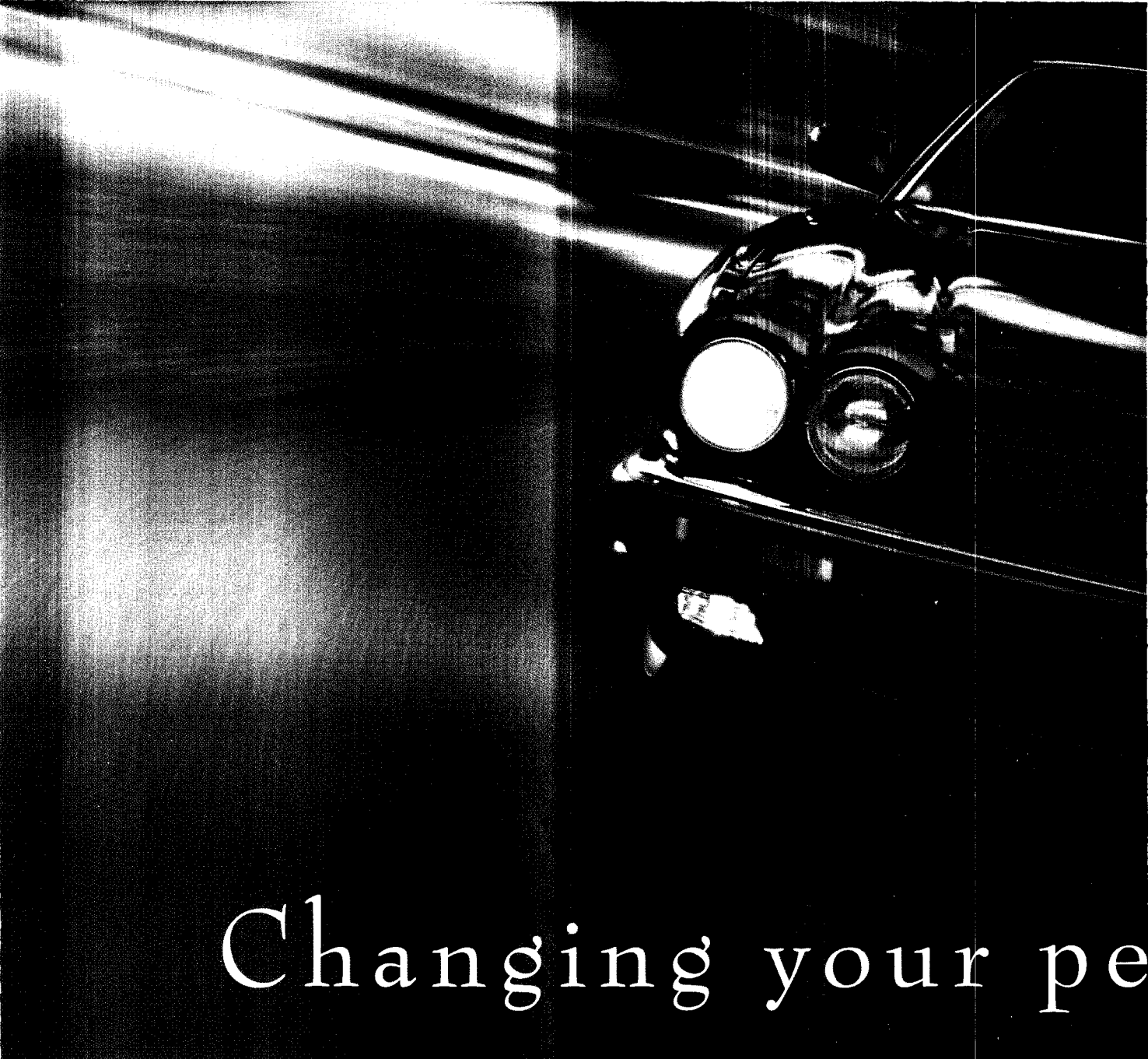
So when I saw your unguarded, reliable face,
your unmistakable gaze opening all the warmth
and clarity of you—warm brown tea—we held
each other for the time the dream allowed.

Bless you. You came back so I could see you
once more, plainly, so I could rest against you
without thinking this happiness lessened anything,
without thinking you were alive again.

—MARK DOTY



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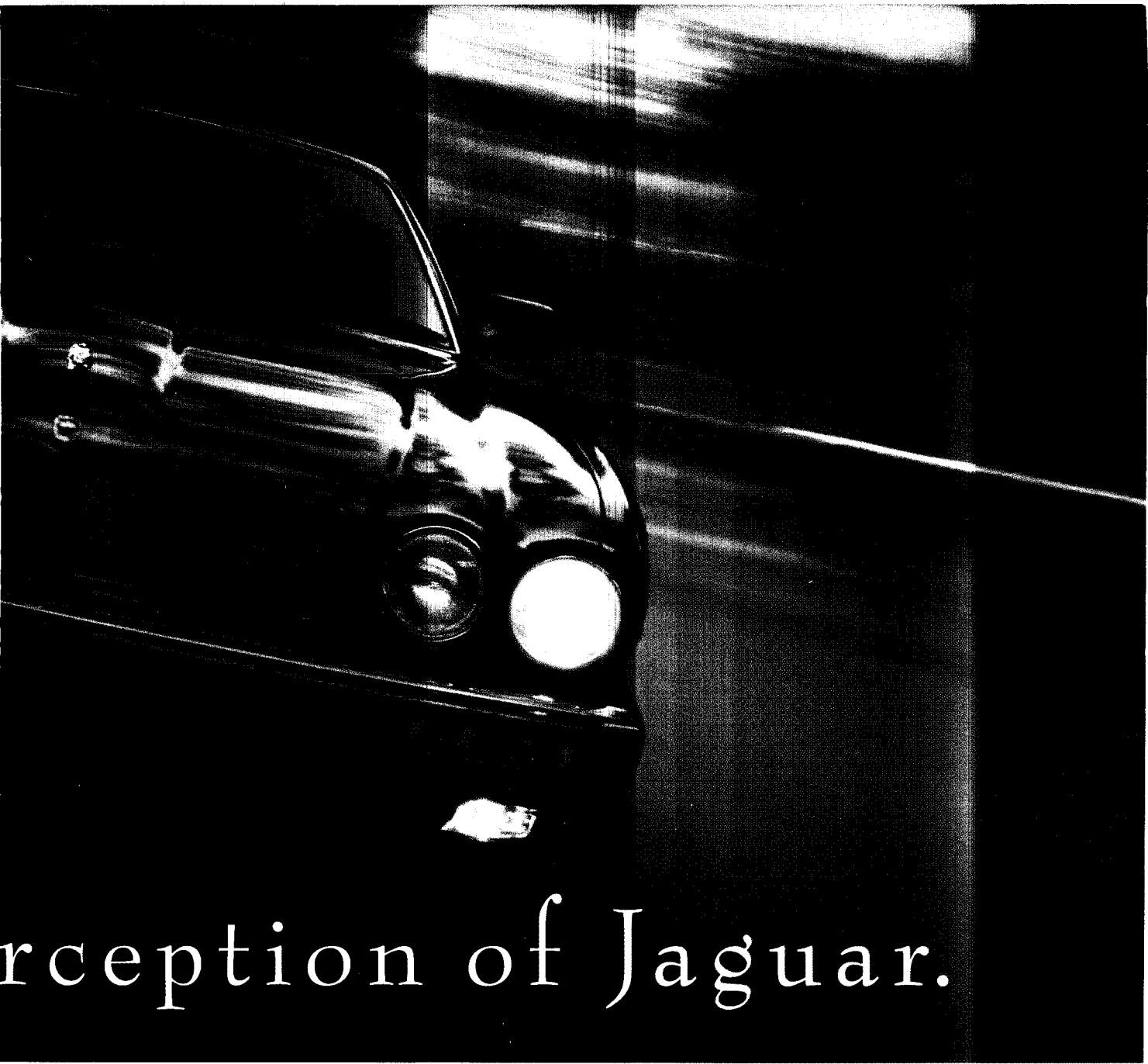
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hours, and his grading of students' academic performance. If these duties are met, they see no problem if the black professor, paying homage to his feelings of racial kinship, goes beyond what is officially required in his dealings with black students.

I see a variety of problems. For one thing, I find it inconceivable that there would be no seepage from the personal sphere into the professional sphere. The students invited to the professor's home are surely being afforded an

white teachers. I never perceived a racial difference in the way that the best of these teachers treated me in comparison with my white classmates. Neither John McCune nor Sanford Levinson nor Eric Foner nor Owen Fiss ever gave me reason to believe that because of my color I took a back seat to any of my classmates when it came to having a claim on their attention. My respect for their conduct is accompanied by disappointment in others who seemed for reasons of racial kinship to invest more in white than in black students—who acted, in other words, in a way that remains unfortunately “normal” in this society.

Am I demanding that teachers make no distinctions between pupils? No. Distinctions should be made. I am simply insisting that sentiments of racial kinship should play no role in making them.

Am I demanding that teachers be blind to race? No. It seems to me bad policy to blind oneself to any potentially useful knowledge. Teachers should be aware of racial differences and differentiations in our society. They should be keenly aware, for instance, that historically and currently the dominant form of racial kinship in American life, the racial kinship that has been best organized and most destructive, is racial kinship mobilized in behalf of whites. This racial kinship has been animated by the desire to make and keep the United States “a white man's country.” It is the racial kinship that politicians like Patrick Buchanan and Jesse Helms openly nurture and exploit. This is also the racial kinship that politicians take care to avoid challenging explicitly. A teacher should be aware of these and other racial facts of life in order to satisfactorily equip stu-

opportunity denied to those who are not invited—an opportunity likely to be reflected in, for instance, letters of recommendation to Judge So-and-So and Law Firm Partner Such-and-Such.

Another problem is that even in the absence of any tangible, dollars-and-cents difference, the teacher's racial distinctions are likely to make a difference psychologically to the students involved. I have had the great benefit of being taught by wonderful teachers of various races, including

students with knowledge about their society.

The fact that race matters, however, does not mean that the salience and consequences of racial distinctions are good or that race must continue to matter in the future. Nor does the brute sociological fact that race matters dictate what one's response to that fact should be.

Assuming that a teacher is aware of the different ways in which the race problem bears down upon his students, how should he react? That depends on the circumstances.



The difficulties disproportionately afflicting blacks

Consider a case, for instance, in which white students were receiving considerable attention from teachers while black students were being widely ignored. In this case it would be morally correct for a professor, with his eyes focused on race, to reach out with special vigor to the black students. In this circumstance the black students would be more in need than the white students, whose needs for mentorship were already being abundantly met. This outreach, however, would be based not on racial kinship but on distributive justice.

OUR PROBLEMS

THE distinction is significant. For one thing, under the rationale of giving priority of attention to those most in need, no racial boundary insulates professors from the obligation to attend to whatever maldistributions of mentorship they are in a position to correct. White professors are at least as morally obligated to address the problem as are black or other professors.

This is a point with ramifications that reach far beyond the university. For it is said with increasing urgency by increasing numbers of people that the various social difficulties confronting black Americans are, for reasons of racial kinship, the moral responsibility of blacks, particularly those who have obtained some degree of affluence. This view should be rejected. The difficulties that disproportionately afflict black Americans are not "black problems" whose solutions are the special responsibility of black people. They are *our* problems, and their solution or amelioration is the responsibility of us all, irrespective of race. That is why it is proper to object when white politicians use the term "you people" to refer to blacks. This happened when Ross Perot addressed the NAACP annual convention during the 1992 presidential election campaign. Many of those who objected to Perot's reference to "you people," however, turned right around and referred to blacks as "our people," thereby replicating the racial boundary-setting they had denounced.

A second reason why the justification for outreach matters is that unlike an appeal to racial kinship, an appeal to an ideal untrammelled by race enables any person or group to be the object of solicitude. No person or group is racially excluded from the possibility of assistance, and no person or group is expected to help only "our own." If a professor reaches out in response to student need, for instance, that means that whereas black students may deserve special solicitude today, Latino students or Asian-American students or white students may deserve it tomorrow. If Asian-American students have a greater need for faculty mentorship than

black students, black professors as well as other professors should give them priority.

Some will argue that I ignore or minimize the fact that different groups are differently situated and that it is thus justifiable to impose upon blacks and whites different standards for purposes of evaluating conduct, beliefs, and sentiments. They will maintain that it is one thing for a white teacher to prefer his white students on grounds of racial kinship and a very different thing for a black teacher to prefer his black students on grounds of racial kinship. The former, they will say, is an expression of ethnocentrism that perpetuates racist inequality, whereas the latter is a laudable expression of racial solidarity that is needed to counter white domination.

Several responses are in order.

First, it is a sociological fact that blacks and whites are differently situated in the American polity. But, again, a brute fact does not dictate the proper human response to it. That is a matter of choice—constrained, to be sure, but a choice nonetheless. In choosing how to proceed in the face of all that they encounter, blacks should insist, as did Martin Luther King Jr., that acting with moral propriety is itself a glorious goal. In seeking to attain that goal, blacks should be attuned not only to the all too human cruelties and weaknesses of others but also to the all too human cruelties and weaknesses in themselves. A good place to start is with the recognition that unless inhibited, every person and group will tend toward beliefs and practices that are self-aggrandizing. This is certainly true of those who inherit a dominant status. But it is also true of those who inherit a subordinate status. Surely one of the most striking features of human dynamics is the alacrity with which those who have been oppressed will oppress whomever they can once the opportunity presents itself. Because this is so, it is not premature to worry about the possibility that blacks or other historically subordinated groups will abuse power to the detriment of others.

Moreover, at long last blacks have sufficient power to raise urgent concerns regarding the abuse of it. Now, in enough circumstances to make the matter worth discussing, blacks are positioned to exploit their potential racial power effectively. Hence black attorneys wonder whether they should seek to elicit the racial loyalties of black jurors or judges in behalf of clients. Black jurors and judges face the question of whether they should respond to such appeals. Black professors face the question of whether racial loyalty should shape the extent to which they make themselves available to their students. Black employers or personnel directors face the question of whether racial loyalties should shape their hiring decisions. Were blacks wholly bereft of power, as some commentators erroneously assert,

these and similar questions would not arise. Thus I evaluate arguments in favor of exempting blacks from the same standards imposed upon whites and conclude that typically, though perhaps not always, such arguments amount to little more than an elaborate camouflage for self-promotion or group promotion.

A second reason I resist arguments in favor of asymmetrical standards of judgment has to do with my sense of the requirements of reciprocity. I find it difficult to accept that it is wrong for whites to mobilize themselves on a racial basis solely for purposes of white advancement but morally permissible for blacks to mobilize themselves on a racial basis solely for purposes of black advancement. I would propose a shoe-on-the-other-foot test for the propriety of racial sentiment. If a sentiment or practice would be judged offensive when voiced or implemented by anyone, it should be viewed as *prima facie* offensive generally. If we would look askance at a white professor who wrote that on grounds of racial kinship he values the opinions of whites more than those of blacks, then unless given persuasive reasons to the contrary, we should look askance at a black professor who writes that on grounds of racial kinship he values the opinions of blacks more than those of whites.

In some circumstances it is more difficult for blacks to give up the consolations of racial kinship than for whites to do so, insofar as whites typically have more resources to fall back on. But that should not matter, or at least should not matter decisively, if my underlying argument—that the sentiments and conduct of racial kinship are morally dubious—is correct. After all, it is surely more difficult for a poor person than for a rich one to give up the opportunity to steal untended merchandise. But we nevertheless rightly expect the poor person to give up that opportunity.

A third consideration is prudential. It is bad for the country if whites, blacks, or any other group engages in the politics of racial kinship, because racial mobilization prompts racial countermobilization, further entrenching a pattern of sterile racial competition.

BEYOND RACIAL LOYALTY

I ANTICIPATE that some will counter that this is what is happening, has happened, and will always happen, and that the best that blacks can expect is what they are able to exact from the white power structure through hard bargaining. In this view, racial unity, racial loyalty, racial solidarity, racial kinship—whatever one wants to call it—is absolutely essential for obtaining the best deal available. Therefore, in this view, my thesis is anathema, the most foolhardy idealism, a plan for ruination, a plea for unilateral disarmament by blacks in the face of a well-armed foe with a long history of bad intentions.

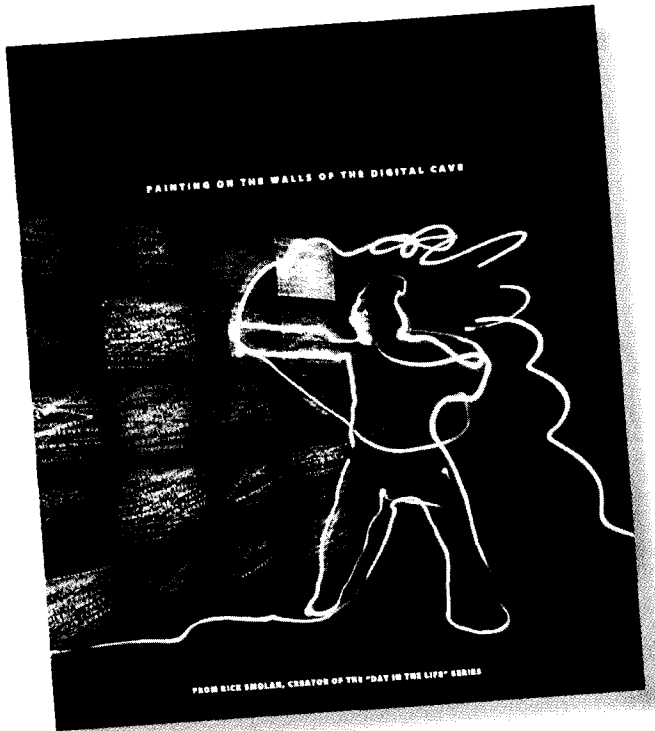
This challenge raises large issues that cannot be exhaustively dealt with here. But I should like to conclude by suggesting the beginning of a response, based on two observations.

First, it is noteworthy that those who have most ostentatiously asserted the imperatives of black racial solidarity—I think here particularly of Marcus Garvey, Elijah Muhammad, and Louis Farrakhan—are also those who have engaged in the most divisive, destructive, and merciless attacks on “brothers” and “sisters” who wished to follow a different path. My objection to the claims of racial pride and kinship stems in part from my fears of the effect on interracial relations. But it stems also in large part from my fears of the stultifying effect on intraracial relations. Racial pride and kinship seem often to stunt intellectual independence. If racial loyalty is deemed essential and morally virtuous, then a black person’s adoption of positions that are deemed racially disloyal will be seen by racial loyalists as a supremely threatening sin, one warranting the harsh punishments that have historically been visited upon alleged traitors.

Second, if one looks at the most admirable efforts by activists to overcome racial oppression in the United States, one finds people who yearn for justice, not merely for the advancement of a particular racial group. One finds people who do not replicate the racial alienations of the larger society but instead welcome interracial intimacy of the most profound sorts. One finds people who are not content to accept the categories of communal affiliation they have inherited but instead insist upon bringing into being new and better forms of communal affiliation, ones in which love and loyalty are unbounded by race. I think here of Wendell Phillips and certain sectors of the abolitionist movement. I also think of James Farmer and the early years of the Congress of Racial Equality, and John Lewis and the early years of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. My favorite champion of this ethos, however, is a person I quoted at the beginning of this article, a person whom the sociologist Orlando Patterson aptly describes as “undoubtedly the most articulate former slave who ever lived,” a person with whose words I would like to end. Frederick Douglass literally bore on his back the stigmata of racial oppression. Speaking in June of 1863, only five months after the Emancipation Proclamation and before the complete abolition of slavery, Douglass gave a talk titled “The Present and Future of the Colored Race in America,” in which he asked whether “the white and colored people of this country [can] be blended into a common nationality, and enjoy together . . . under the same flag, the inestimable blessings of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as neighborly citizens of a common country.” He answered: “I believe they can.”

I, too, believe we can, if we are willing to reconsider and reconstruct the basis of our feelings of pride and kinship. ☛

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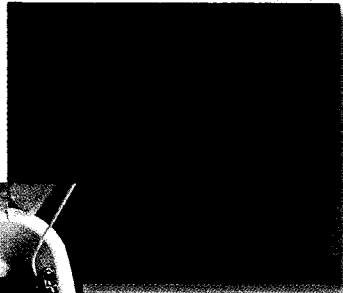
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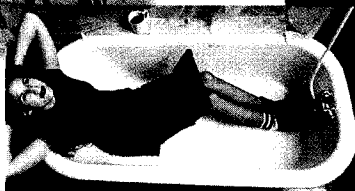
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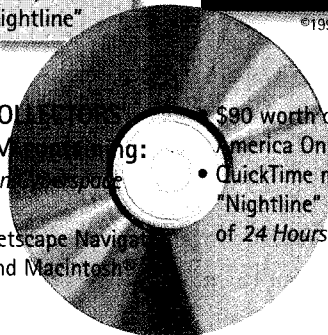
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A Word on Statistics

by WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA

(translated from the Polish by Joanna Trzeciak)

Out of every hundred people,

those who always know better:
fifty-two.

Unsure of every step:
almost all the rest.

Ready to help,
if it doesn't take long:
forty-nine.

Always good,
because they cannot be otherwise:
four—well, maybe five.

Able to admire without envy:
eighteen.

Led to error
by youth (which passes):
sixty, plus or minus.

Those not to be messed with:
four-and-forty.

Living in constant fear
of someone or something:
seventy-seven.

Capable of happiness:
twenty-some-odd at most.

Harmless alone,
turning savage in crowds:
more than half, for sure.

Cruel
when forced by circumstances:
it's better not to know,
not even approximately.

Wise in hindsight:
not many more
than wise in foresight.

Getting nothing out of life except things:
thirty
(though I would like to be wrong).

Balled up in pain
and without a flashlight in the dark:
eighty-three, sooner or later.

Those who are just:
quite a few, thirty-five.

But if it takes effort to understand:
three.

Worthy of empathy:
ninety-nine.

Mortal:
one hundred out of one hundred—
a figure that has never varied yet.

The desert that glistened with water.

Southeastern New Mexico.

It's home to mesquite and
chaparral, dust devils and mesas
and horizons that shimmer
with heat.

For the animals of this parched
land, survival comes with water.

So people who work in the
area helped build special watering
holes just for them.

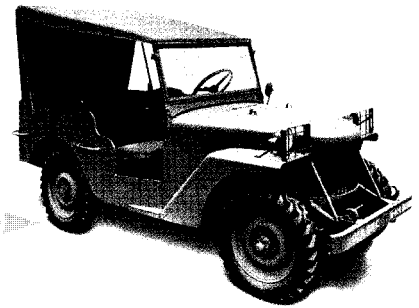
Do people need to find ways to
quench nature's thirst?

People Do.

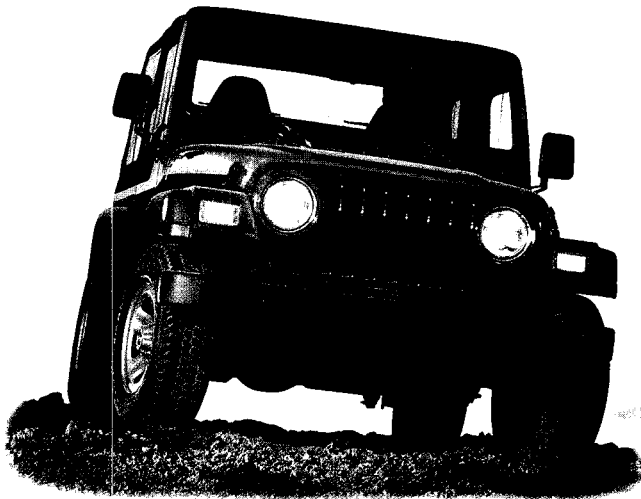


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Code-named "Quad," two
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October 30, 1996:
Petersen's 4-Wheel & Off-Road
hails all-new 1997 Jeep Wrangler as
4x4 of the Year. (Fifth time the title is
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February 12, 1996:
Bowling to Jeep loyalists,
Chrysler engineers come
full circle and return
round headlights to the
all-new Jeep Wrangler.

It's no coincidence that today's Jeep Wrangler bears an unmistakable likeness to the original Willys MB. In fact, we at Chrysler Corporation wouldn't have it any other way. Over the years

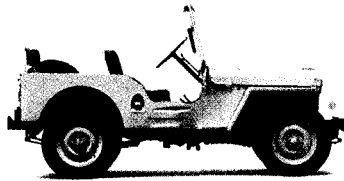
we've continually honed, finessed, and refined the Jeep Wrangler in more ways than we can count. But we did it without compromising its indomitable Jeep character. Because as the care-

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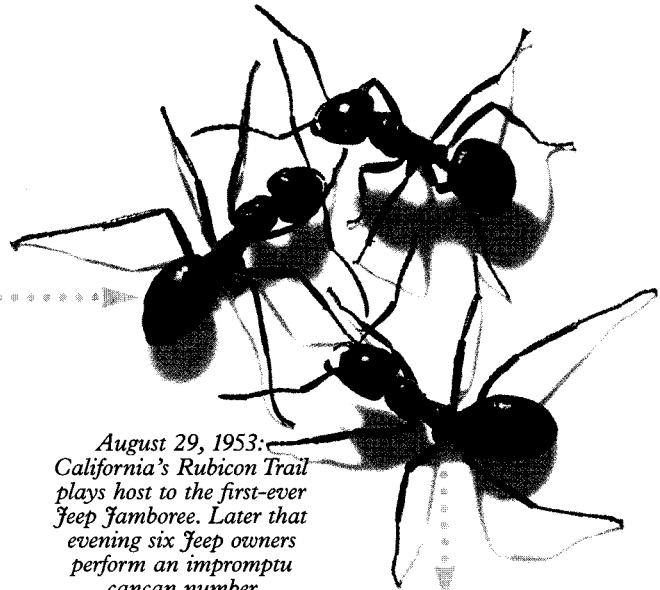
Always wear your seat belt. Jeep is a registered



April 23, 1944:
Theories on the origin of the Jeep name prompt a Washington Post editorial. One unlikely view holds it was coined after the Popeye comic strip character, "Eugene the Jeep." Others believe it was short for "GP," or general purpose. Either way, the name stuck.



June 16, 1945:
Willys MB changes into civilian garb with the introduction of the Willys Universal. Modifications include removing the gun holster from the windshield.



August 29, 1953:
California's Rubicon Trail plays host to the first-ever Jeep Jamboree. Later that evening six Jeep owners perform an impromptu cancan number around the campfire.

January 20, 1965:
Every float in the Presidential Inaugural Parade in Washington, D.C., is pulled by a Jeep CJ5. Overseas, Jeep vehicles are marketed in more than 100 countries.



April 30, 1995:
All-new 1997 Jeep Wrangler is subjected to rigorous testing for contingencies that range from high-speed desert driving in Saudi Arabia to Alaskan temperature extremes.



August 5, 1987:
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In Paradise all yearnings become fact.
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fulfillment exceeds the dream

Puttermesser in Paradise

by CYNTHIA OZICK

Knit and unravel,
commands the Gavel.
Do and undo,
till nothing's true.

—A Song of Paradise,
translated from the Akkadian

VERY deep is the well of the past. Should we not call it bottomless?"

It was Thomas Mann: the opening sentences of *Joseph and His Brothers*. Ruth Puttermesser, sitting under the green lamp in her lonely bedroom only moments before her death, sitting with the weight of that mighty tale of a magus pressing into her ribs, was thinking of Paradise: very deep is the well of Paradise; should we not call it bottomless?

It happens that in the several seconds before we die, the well of the ribs opens, and a crystal pebble is thrown in; then there is a distant tiny splash, no more than the chirp of a droplet. This seeming pebble is the earthly equal of what astrophysicists call a black hole—a dead sun that has collapsed into itself, shrinking from density to deeper density, until it is smaller than the period at the end of this sentence. Until it is less than infinitesimal.

Puttermesser heard (she did not feel) the pebble's electric *ping!* as it pierced the veil of the sluice that lay at the bottom of the well—or, rather, as it flew through the impalpable membrane that marked the beginning of bottomlessness. And at the bottom of this bottomlessness (in Eden oxymorons are as esteemed as orchids) there was *pardes*. "*Pardes*" is a Hebrew word, as befits so messianic a thought; it means an orchard, it means a garden, it means Paradise—derived, no doubt, in this intertwining of the vines of civilization, from the Greek *Paradeisos*.

Yet, as Puttermesser sat alone in her bedroom under the green lamp, with the magisterial Mann pressed against her

chest, her death was still moments away, and she was now as far from entering Eden as she had been at the instant of her birth. The radiator exhaled its familiar little winter sigh, and over bed, books, and desk the green lamp threw out a cave-like velvet halo. Under Puttermesser's hand and eye Mann was speaking:

There are deeply chamfered trains of thought out of which one does not escape, once in them; associations cut and dried from old time, which fit into each other like rings in a chain, so that he who has said A cannot help saying B or at least thinking it; and like links in a chain they are, too, in that in them the earthly and heavenly are so interlocked one into the other that one passes willy-nilly, and whether speaking or silent, from one to the other.

Puttermesser's mind flew into and behind these phrases like a spirit that can pass through walls. Exegetical, onomastic Puttermesser! What was she musing on in the flash of life still allotted to her? She was thinking of Paradise, yes, but (because the earthly and the heavenly are so interlocked one into the other) she was also thinking how names have their destiny, how they drive whoever holds or beholds them. For instance: the poet Wordsworth giving exact value for each syllable. Or Mann himself—Man, Mankind, seeking the origins of human character in Israelitish prehistory. Or how one Eliot reins in the other Eliot: "the jew squats on the window sill" (that's Tom) rebuked by Deronda's visionary Zion (that's George). And James, the aristocratic Jacobite, pretender to the throne. Joyce's Molly rejoicing. Bellow fanning fires, Up-

dike fingering apertures, Oates wildly sowing, Roth wroth. And so on. Puttermesser: no more cutting than a butter knife.

The earthly and the heavenly are so interlocked that one passes willy-nilly, and whether speaking or silent, from one to the other. Without transition? Without interim or hiatus or breath? Without fear?

Puttermesser is about to be murdered and raped—in that order. She was murdered before she was raped. The intruder—the murderer, the rapist, in that order—slid, slipped, crept into her bedroom through the slightly raised window behind Puttermesser's reading chair. The window was raised despite the February cold; the apartment, like so many apartments in New York, was stifling. The radiator was a fiery accordion, belching out its own equatorial weather.

She heard a kind of kick or knock; the intruder was standing on top of the radiator. The rubber on the soles of his sneakers gave out a burning smell.

She saw him then; she saw the knife, a long blade on a spring, as far in its intent from the work of a butter knife as Tom is from George. "Frank," he said—and how strange it was that he spoke his own name! Or perhaps, whatever the deed to come, it is not within the scope of human aspiration to remain anonymous. "It's me, Frankie," he said. And then, in familiar movietone, "Do what I tell ya or you're dead."

So, in those last minutes, she secretly undertook to call him *Candide*—for his frankness, for his candor. His face she did not see: it was fully hooded in what she supposed was a ski mask. She supposed it was a ski mask not from ever having glimpsed one of these—when had exegetical, onomastic, urban Puttermesser, now close to the biblical three score and ten (but she was not to reach it), ever scaled a magic mountain capped with snow? It was all newspaper knowledge: who hasn't read of muggers in ski masks?

Candide inquired, "Whatchoo got in here's worth somethin'?" Under the ski mask a pair of eyeglasses glinted; his head was horrible, supernatural, a great woolly maroon knob with two ferocious headlights. In the bedroom closet he found Puttermesser's old typewriter. He didn't want it. He gave it a kick. He opened a dresser drawer and scrabbled around in it and pulled out Puttermesser's papa's silver watch; it went right into his pocket. It was an old-fashioned wind-up watch.

Candide inquired, "Rings? Earrings? Where you put 'em?"

But she had none of these things. Exegetical, onomastic, urban, puritanical Puttermesser! A necklace or two might have saved her life.

Her eyes fled to the one possibly desirable object within reach: on the teak table in the corner of her bedroom stood a computer. Puttermesser had acquired this device as a hand-me-down; she was now technologically ascended. Harvey Morgenbluth, upstairs in 6-C, had bought himself a newer model. The old one was already obsolete, superseded—though good enough for a novice like Puttermesser. These machines were spawned in "generations," Harvey Morgen-

bluth explained, and succeeded one another with the rapidity of fruit flies. Puttermesser was reluctant to give up her workhorse typewriter for a fruit fly; she felt much as her turn-of-the-century predecessors had felt when they were obliged to move from gas lighting to electricity, or from Dobbin's warm flanks to a motorcar. Still, humanity was turning on its temporal hinge, and Puttermesser was obliged to turn with it.

"You can take that," she said to the horrible woolly knob, with its lit-up peepholes. "Just take it and go."

"You got rings? Earrings? No?" He lifted the computer off the table, wrenching it free of the keyboard; the wires trailed. Then he set it down on the floor and gave it a kick. "Where you keep 'em? Rings, bracelets, hah?" She watched him shut the bedroom door and barricade it with Harvey Morgenbluth's obsolete old model. She was trapped. The computer's silent glass mouth was indifferent, though she had brought it to life often enough, a genie spewing alphabets. Lately Puttermesser had begun to type out improbables—or the genie had.

Secreted inside the computer's dead mouth, improbable, impalpable, were these curious fragments:

My father is nearly a Yankee: *his* father gave up peddling to captain a dry-goods store in Providence, Rhode Island. In summer he sold captain's hats, and wore one in all his photographs. From Castle Garden to blue New England mists, my father's father, hat-and-neckware peddler to Yankees! Providence, Rhode Island, beats richly in my veins.

My younger sister was once highly motivated as a scholar, but instead she married an Indian, a Parsee chemist, and went to live in Calcutta. She has four children and seven saris of various fabrics.

Not a single syllable of this was true. She had no sister, whether younger or older. Nothing of New England ran in her veins. Her history was bare of near-Yankees. She had never known her grandfather, dead now for more than seventy years; that grandfather, sickly, had never left the wretched little village of his birth in cold, corrupt old Russia. It was her papa who had run from the Czar's depredations and passed through Castle Garden's great hall: an immigrant speck in an immigrant tide.

The genie in the computer was revising Puttermesser's ancestry; it was dreaming Puttermesser's dreams—even her newest dream of Paradise.

Here is how it will be [the genie had written in Puttermesser's voice]. I will sit in Eden under a middle-sized tree, in the solid blaze of an infinite heart-of-July, green, green, green everywhere, green above and green below, myself gleaming and made glorious by sweat, every itch annihilated, fecundity dismissed. Day after celestial day, perfection of desire upon perfection of contemplation, into the exaltations of an uninterrupted forever. In Eden all in-

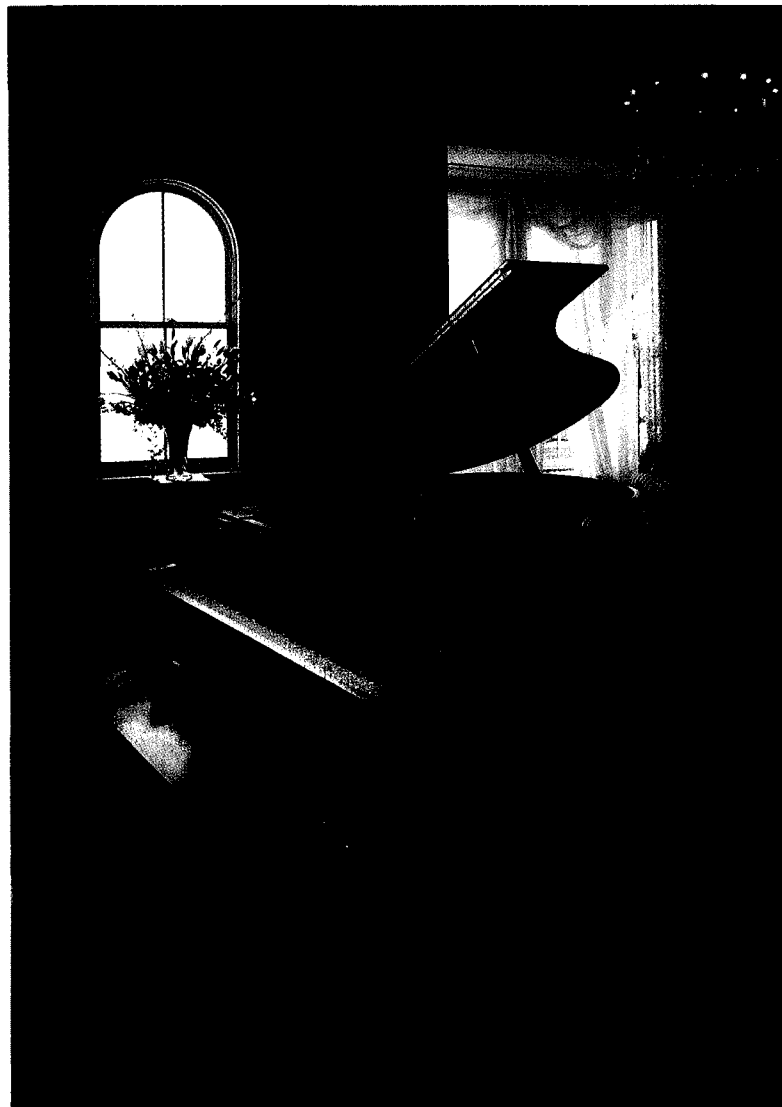
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satiabilities are nourished: I will learn about the linkages of genes, about quarks, about primate sign language, theories of the origins of the races, religions of ancient civilizations, what Stonehenge meant. I will study Roman law, the more arcane varieties of higher mathematics, the nuclear composition of the stars, what happened to the Monophysites, Chinese history, Russian, and Icelandic.

Ah, false, false! Paradise, when Puttermesser was transported there, bore no resemblance to this hungry imagining. Paradise, when Puttermesser was transported there, was . . . but no. No and no. First she must get through the murder and the rape.

Clearly the computer had no interest for Candide. He was looking for something portable. Puttermesser undid the band of her wristwatch and tossed the watch across the room to where he was standing. He caught it with one hand, examined it, dropped it to the floor, and stepped on it. The plastic face crackled under his sneaker. "Garbage," he said. "Worth ten bucks. Don't dis me, lady."

She did not know what to do. "Try the kitchen," she said. "The spoons and things." She thought, *Let him just open the bedroom door*—she would fly through it and get away.

"Sterling?" Candide inquired.

"Oh, yes," Puttermesser assured him. There was nothing in her kitchen drawers but stainless steel.

"Okay," he said. "I'll go look. But don't you move, lady."

He shoved aside the computer and opened the door. The green lamp reflected greenly in the ski mask's portholes. "Hey, wait," he said, and felt for something in his pocket.

It was a narrow rope. In no time at all—his fingers were admirably quick—he had tied her wrists to the radiator. With a twist of the rope she was flung to the floor. There she lay, contorted, staring through the rungs of the chair.

He went out and came back.

"You lyin' to me, lady. It's all garbage in there."

"There's cash in my purse."

"Where you keepin' it, hah?"

She was weeping now—a painful mute weeping, as if her vocal cords had been suddenly cut.

He found her purse—it was right there on the dresser—and turned her wallet upside down. Through the rungs of the chair she saw the falling fan of cards and green bills. But a raging light shone through the holes of the mask.

Candide said, "I don't like no credit cards, and I don't like no chicken shit."

How quick and fastidious his fingers were! He wiggled the knife and made it shimmer and shiver; then he put the handle to his lips, like a flute, and kissed it. He pushed the chair out of the way to clear a space, and stood astride her, a sneaker close to each ear. She could smell the rubber soles of his sneakers, but the rubber smell was oddly mixed with the smell of vomit, and she understood that it was her own vomit. She was vomiting, and she felt defiled by her own vomit,

and also by a terror so frigid that it left her unaware of the spasms that must be convulsing her esophagus. It seemed to her important—she sensed this acutely—not to offend him by crying out, but her breath ran thin. It was anyhow not possible: he had placed the weight of *Joseph and His Brothers* on her breasts, and was heaving downward with one powerful flattened palm. He began efficiently with the throat—the vocal cords were sliced through instantly—and then crisscrossed the blade rapidly over the ears, lopping off half a lobe on the right ear. Her breath ran thinner now, but she could taste the rusty wetness that was her blood. Then he repositioned her torso, ripped the knife through her underpants . . .

But by then Puttermesser was in Paradise. Like the excruciations of labor (but how could Puttermesser know this? she had never given birth), dying, even agonized dying, generates its own amnesia. And since the rape was committed after the last living sigh had left her body, there was nothing to erase from Puttermesser's posthumous cognition. For her, the rape never happened at all.

Some suppose that in Paradise one is permitted to bend over the bar of heaven, so to speak, for a final contemplation of one's abandoned flesh. This is a famous untruth steeped in a profound illogic. Had Puttermesser been able to view herself tethered, bloodied, torn, mutilated, stripped, striped, violated—had she taken in so malignant a scene, so degenerate an act: the lower quarters of her carcass still hot, the tissues still elastic, yet resistant to easy penetration because the wall of death had already blinded every cell, death its own stricken fortress; had Puttermesser seen that engorged member crash through the entryway to the lately untrodden tunnel between her elderly thighs; had she seen the ski mask smeared with vomit, and the wily fingers that held the knife lavish vomit on that ramming organ—she might have been swept and rent by a pity so enduring that Paradise could not tolerate or sustain it.

That is why a last look is not allowed. That is why there is no pity in Paradise. And that is why Paradise is coldhearted.

A second misconception: Paradise has no gate or door or vestibule. Simply, one arrives—or, rather, since this is Puttermesser's history, Puttermesser was all at once *there*. Or *here*: though this, too, is misleading. Paradise permits no before or after, no over there or right here, no up or down, no then or now, no happy or sad. This last phrase may be puzzling. No sadness in Paradise is to be expected; but no happiness? Isn't happiness the *point* of Paradise?

Return for a moment (but in Paradise there are no moments: no hours, minutes, or seconds) to that earliest word in the world's earliest tale: *pardes*. The orchard, the garden. But *pardes* is also an acronym for a way of understanding—even for understanding the meaning of *pardes* itself. Dismiss the vowels and consider: PRDS. All the letters tied in a bouquet constitute *pardes*. (Or Paradise. Or *Paradeisos*.) But taken one by one, the letters contain their own meaning. Now follow closely.

- P. This stands for *p'shat*.
- R. This stands for *remez*.
- D. This stands for *drash*.
- S. This stands for *sod*.

Now follow closely again; these are words for adepts. (And be patient. We will come back to Puttermesser. Only see how mistaken she was in dreaming that Paradise is a place to study in! In Paradise everything has already been learned; all intellectual curiosity is slaked.) Let us begin.

- P'shat* is the obvious sense: the readiest meaning.
- Remez* is the allusive sense: that which is hinted at or inferred.
- Drash* is the induced sense, an interpretation: that which requires investigation and must be drawn out. A theory, in short.
- Sod*, ah, *sod*: this is the secret meaning.

In Paradise only scriptural languages are spoken. You will recognize Hebrew (of course), Sanskrit, Arabic, and other hallowed texts; yet all these sacred tongues are interchangeable—that is, their speakers are not aware of any differences, whether in their own speech or in the speech of other paradisaal denizens. Puttermesser, for instance, imagined that she was uttering the syllables of her native New York; in actuality she was speaking the archaic Hebrew, bold and blunt, of Genesis. But to continue.

- Paradise in the obvious sense: it is where you find yourself when you die. (Simple!)
- Paradise in the allusive sense: there are hints in Paradise of how your life deserves to be judged. Also hints of indifference to all that.
- Paradise interpreted: this Puttermesser is sure to accomplish.
- The secret meaning of Paradise: it resides solely in the pupil of the Eye of God.

Even before her removal to this place, these formulations were not new to Puttermesser. What chiefly struck her was that PRDS in all its branches had nothing to do with any idea of the future: yet wasn't Eden particularly known as the World to Come? So here was still another misapprehension: Puttermesser, like all mortals, had erroneously assumed that Paradise *was* the future. It was, she thought, immortality.

But as she wandered through its various neighborhoods, she came on living persons, in full health; she was certain they had not died. She found theaters and concert halls and movie houses and video shops and poetry readings. She stopped to listen to one of these: a middle-aged Russian, disheveled, red-haired, out of breath, a trifle irascible. His Old Church Slavonic, recited at a rapid clip, had the explicit inflections of the streets that sidle away from the Nevsky Prospekt. And then (this was perhaps *remez*) Puttermesser understood that all this was what in an earthly vocabulary would be called hallucination. Surely

the living were not in Paradise. She looked around for W. H. Auden, who had befriended the Russian poet, and who was unarguably dead. But she saw and heard only the still-alive and lively Russian. Flowers were at his feet: she recognized tulips, red, yellow, and white, and gladioli, and violets, and a patch of tiny impatiens. The trees were indistinguishable from earthly trees. Everything had an inner fluorescence.

Plainly, then (she had arrived at *drash*), Paradise was the place—though it was not exactly a *place*—where she could walk freely inside her imagination and call up anything she desired. But anything she might call up would inevitably be from the past—what else had she brought with her? Yet if, as she now somehow knew, there was in fact no past or future in Paradise, and only a puzzling present, with a flesh-and-blood, not-yet-resurrected poet declaiming from a lectern in a flowery realm famously reserved for the deceased, then what was it she was actually calling up?

The lost, the missing, the wished for. The unfinished and the unachieved. The record of her life not as she had lived it but as she had failed to live it. If she was curious about a poet (and, yes, she was curious about the Russian, who, like her own papa, had escaped a ferocious tyranny; and also she was a little bewildered by him, even a little suspicious, because hadn't he once slyly declared for polytheism, or at least against monotheism?), well, there he suddenly was. She could hear him out; she supposed she could, if she liked, ask him anything at all, and he would have to answer her. He was, after all, a simulacrum, a palpable vision, and wholly subject to her newly celestial will. Whereas while she lived he had been a remote figure, inaccessible, distantly lofty and strange. She had felt his exclusion, his hauteur, his rebuff.

But now the whirlwind of her mind could command his presence. His presence or anyone's! She had only to *think*, and the thought would appear incarnate before her. Ah, delightful! Splendid! It was, in truth, Paradise.

 T nineteen she had been enormously in love, and was rejected. The man's name was Emil Hauchvogel. He was twenty-two. He had a beautiful head, molded like a Roman sculpture, and he was a student of philosophy. His voice was blurred, very faintly, by a thread of foreignness pulled along the edge of the vowels; as a child of eleven or twelve he had fled from Hitler's Germany with his parents. In Frankfurt his father had been a well-off wholesaler, and though the family had arrived in New York as impoverished refugees, Emil's father worked his way up and managed to establish himself securely in the same business. Emil reflected this paternal striving and success: he had the confident air of a young lord, but not in the sense of easy inheritance. He was trained for ambition.

Emil's college was small, bucolic, venerable, revered. Puttermesser's college, a winding subway ride from the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, was urban, mobbed, brash. She, too,

longed for philosophy, but it was too hard for her. Her brain was not subtle enough: desire wasn't capacity. She encountered questions she could barely grasp the import of, and theories that floated by like so many indefinable cloud shapes. What did Thrasy-machus intend? Could one trust the Nicomachean Ethics? Is pleasure an activity or merely a feeling?

One morning in early January she read a notice on the bulletin board just outside the cafeteria.

NEW ENGLAND WINTER WEEKEND RETREAT
SUBJECT: CAN THERE BE MORALITY WITHOUT GOD?

Puttermessenger knew what she thought. An ethical imperative without a divine order to implant and enforce it was unlikely, was no imperative at all. The unheated bus rattled and groaned uphill for miles on a narrow highway between wintry fields. The claws of naked branches were black against the snow. In her old galoshes Puttermessenger's feet grew numb. The dozen other students ate their sandwiches or catnapped. Now and then they sang; the pompons on their hats bounced. Wound in scarves, clapping their woolen mittens in time with the singing, the live breath, as if from teakettles, steaming from their rounded mouths, patches of red brightening their cheeks, they seemed as remote from metaphysics as their lunch bags and knapsacks. Yet weren't they all heading for those immaculate country snowfields to talk of God?

Emil Hauchvogel met the bus in the parking lot behind the dormitories. The dorms were mostly empty, he explained: everyone had gone home for New Year's, and the little group of philosophers would have the whole campus nearly to themselves. It wouldn't all be high thought—skis and sleds were ready for use in one of the halls. Emil, clearly, was the organizer. Puttermessenger got off the bus with cramped legs and a full bladder. Wherever she turned, the ground was white. The low college buildings peeped out like miniature Swiss chalets. Puttermessenger's citified heart rose in her well-bundled ribs.

First they had toast and vegetarian soup, and then came the sledding. It was already dusk. Puttermessenger went on her belly down the long hill, forgetting to steer: she ended half-buried in a snow mound. "That's not the way," Emil said. He was in charge of everything and everyone. At the top of the hill he eased himself down flat on the sled, and Puttermessenger climbed on. The length of her lay against his back and rump and thighs. His legs stuck out well beyond the runners. The two of them rushed downward like some mythical double creature—or else it was only the wind that rushed: her body resting on Emil's, Puttermessenger felt warm, cradled, lazy, even sleepy. The slope seemed infinitely longer than before, the descent dozingly slow. "See?" Emil said when they reached the bottom of the hill. "It's all in the *hands*. You have to control the direction; you can't just go hurling yourself any old way."

And after that he paid her no attention at all. From a little distance she saw him helping with the straps of a pair of skis.

The skier breathed out teakettle steam and had ruddy cheeks under a pomponed wool hat; nevertheless, she had not been on the bus. She belonged to Emil's own tribe; she belonged to this superior landscape. Streamers of white-blonde bangs swayed under the wool hat. With a fierce and ready shriek she plunged through the blue-black dark, a flying crescent on a falling path.

In the morning all the philosophers, still scarfed and mitted, met in a latticed gazebo. Heaters had been set up in the middle of a ring of benches; icicle spears hung down from the eaves. The sunlight on the snow cut blind streaks across Puttermessenger's sight. The day was too brilliant—and far too cold, despite the wafting heaters—to sit still. The philosophers from Emil's college—the ones who were at home here, the natives—grouped themselves all together on one side of the gazebo, apart from the philosophers who had come on the bus. "The city mice and the country mice," Emil objected, and made everyone stand up and change places. As for the cold, he said, the clarity of the air would clarify thought. "Purity of heart is to will one thing," he said. "That's Kierkegaard," muttered yesterday's skier.

Then Emil lectured. His theme was religion and art. At the beginning of all civilizations art and religion were ineluctably fused: a god was a statue or a painting. The gods spoke through their physical representations. Ra, for instance, a supreme Egyptian deity, expressed himself through a golden disk atop a falcon's head. "My skin is of pure gold," sang the sun-priests of Ra.

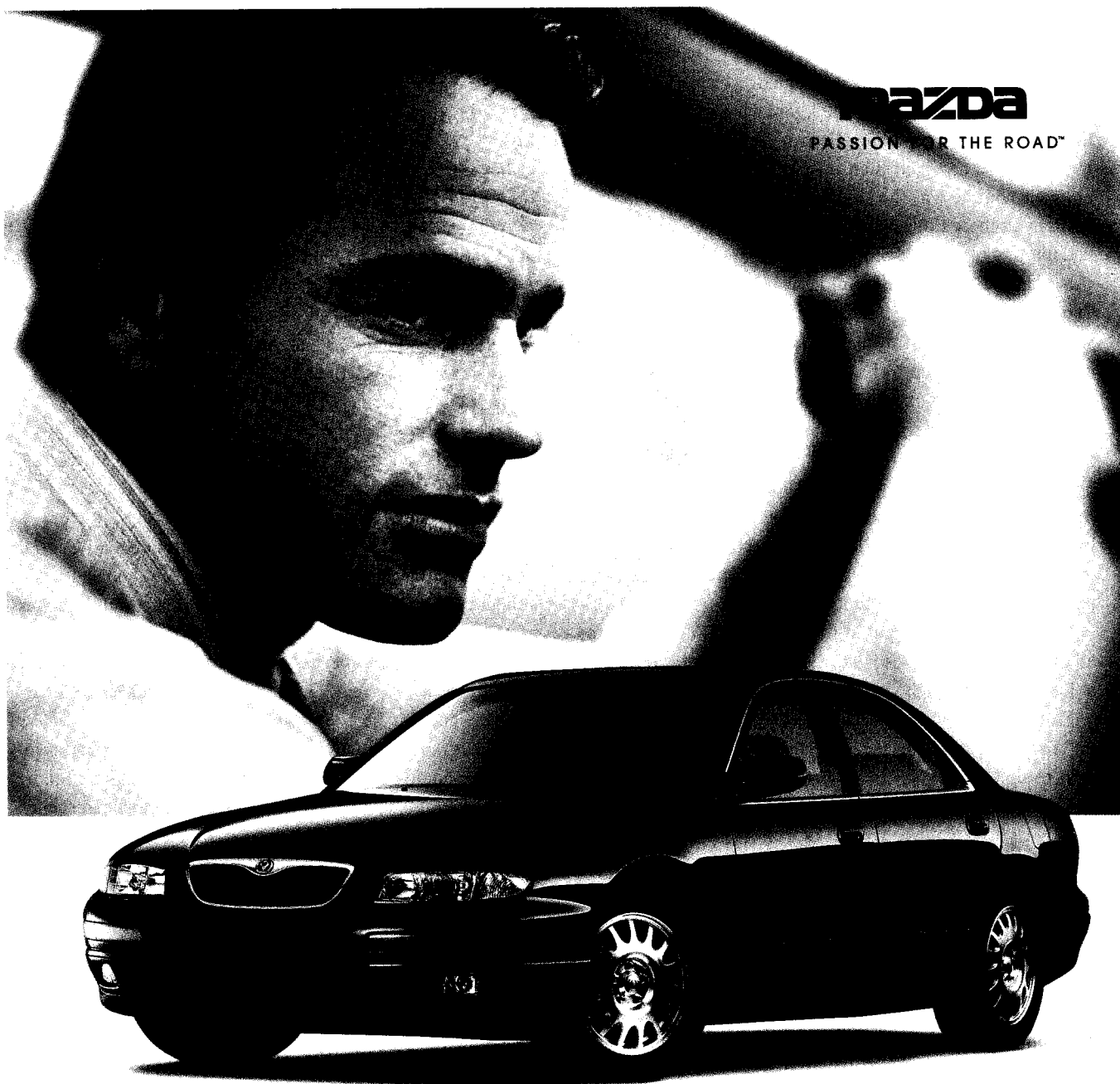
"You see?" Emil said, pacing around the heaters. The sun illumined the pale disks of his eyes: he had turned himself into Ra. How beautiful he was! In the dazzling morning light the skin of his face was of pure gold. "Once the God of the Jews forbade art in religion, then art was released—released forever—to follow its own impulse. Once art was exempted from idol-making, from religious duty, it could see what it wished, it could record what it liked, it could play and cavort and distort—whatever it pleased! And all without obligation to sanctity. Pious obeisance was dismissed. Unwanted! Excluded! Art was free to be free! The Second Commandment had kicked it out of religion!

"You see?" Emil said again, looking all around. He had a princely pleasure in his own wit.

But was it wit in praise or in dispraise? Puttermessenger, bewilderment contracting her throat (unless she was starting to catch cold?), could not be sure. Was he mocking the Second Commandment or lauding it? Was he an atheist or a believer?

"So if art can thrive best in the absence of religion," Emil concluded, "if in fact religious connection imperils a truly autonomous art, then the same applies to morality, doesn't it? Art didn't really become art until it shucked off God. And morality won't really be morality until it, too, gets rid of God."

A jumble of city voices protested. "That doesn't follow!"



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"You haven't proved it about art anyhow!" "Sophistry!" But all the country philosophers applauded.

Puttermessenger was silent. She knew what she thought: she thought Emil was shocking. He was certainly a novelty, but he was more arrogant than novel. He was spontaneously eloquent, but he was too self-aware: he was an egotist. She thought all these things and felt her own shame, because she had nothing to say, she could invent nothing so startling. She was empty. But how beautiful he was, how vehement; how extraordinary were his mind-passions! He was against God with all the fervor of a mystic; he was a purist; he found even the idea of God to be perfectly useless. And he was a visionary in search of converts against God.

Puttermessenger understood that she was being shaken with a violent infatuation.

By now all the philosophers had spoken, one by one, each in turn. The gazebo was serious and orderly. Icicles, warmed by the sun, were leaking idle drops from their tips. The dripping sounds fell in a syncopated pattern. Puttermessenger sat, a pariah in her muteness, a simpleton.

Emil was standing right in front of her. "You didn't come all this way just to be obstinate, did you?" he said. "You could at least disclose which view your obstinacy intends to serve."

Puttermessenger could not answer.

"You're obstructing the movement of the meeting. Say something."

She offered miserably, "It's God who makes us good."

"That's how children think," Emil said.

The city and the country philosophers sent out their morning smiles. What contempt they had for her!

Emil bent and said quietly into her ear, "You're not being very effective here, are you?"

And this whispered judgment—*You're not being very effective here*—infiltrated Puttermessenger's brain with a deadly permanence. It stung; it endured; she remembered it always. He had cut her down; he had belittled her.

A second meeting in the gazebo was called for the afternoon. Emil had supplied everyone with a printed schedule. The philosophers ignored it; instead they went out to the hill to slide and flirt. The two camps were willing enough, by now, to mix freely, and in the sharp horizonless light of the snow Puttermessenger could no longer tell who was city and who was country: all those reddened frozen faces, and the smell of damp wool, and teasing spite spiraling into laughter. God and morality were left unresolved. The laughter rolled up and down the hill. Puttermessenger lashed her scarf over her nose and mouth, butted her head into the wind, and trekked out to the gazebo.

Only Emil was there.

"Nobody came," he said.

But *she* had come; was she nobody?

"The magnet of youth appears to be stronger than magnitudes of thought," Emil said. "They'd rather kiss in the snow."

"So would I," Puttermessenger said. How reckless she was, to speak in such a way!

"As long as you could be sure that God lurks behind every kiss?"

Puttermessenger said soberly, "I think we're indebted to a sublime force at all times, whether or not we acknowledge it."

"You need to read Bertrand Russell. You need to be disabused of myth. You ought to look into Kant. Kant said that if God exists, and if we act out of love or awe of God, or out of confidence in a divine reward, then our conduct isn't morality, it's prudent self-interest."

"Listen," he finished, "one of these days when I'm in the city I'll give you a call."

"Why?" Puttermessenger asked. She was in full earnest.

"To teach you how to seek virtue in a Godless universe," Emil said.



HEY met at the information booth in Grand Central Station. Puttermessenger arrived half an hour late, and condemned herself. She had been afraid to set out. She was afraid of Emil Hauchvogel; she was afraid of her own inferiority. At twenty-two he had absorbed all of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche; he read George Meredith and Ronald Firbank; he could recite whole speeches from *Timon of Athens* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and knew a dozen arias by heart. He could say the names of French and Italian film directors, and tell you which were their most nuanced scenes and what kind of lens the cameraman used to control the lighting. He was capable of certain striking ruminations on Turing and Gödel. And of course he was at home in German.

It was a warm April evening. Puttermessenger had never expected to see Emil Hauchvogel again, and here he was. They were heading for a concert at Carnegie Hall. She recognized that her fear of him had flattered him; it was the pleasure of her awe he must be after. He was not above enjoying such a thing; he knew he deserved it. His brown hair sprang abundantly and ardently upward, as if it had a different rule, or route, for spring. Puttermessenger wore her only dress-up things: a bright-green angora sweater and a tan corduroy skirt in the new style, nearly all the way down to her ankles, like an illustration in a Victorian novel. She saw that he was not pleased with her clothes; she guessed that he had a low opinion of angora and corduroy in the concert hall. She was an experiment that was already failing.

After the concert she declined his offer of a cigarette (she never smoked). She hung back when he proposed a nearby bar, and drew him instead into Howard Johnson's. He watched her drink her ice-cream soda to the lees and tapped his cigarette ash into his empty coffee cup. "You should learn something about music," he announced, but he did not say he would teach her. He did not speak of a Godless universe or of an ethics viable in the absence of divine power. She had prepared herself, and had searched out Bertrand



Russell and the *Critique of Pure Reason* in the college library. But now his thoughts were elsewhere: Ives and Milhaud, Copland and Thomson, Schoenberg and Bloch. His talk left her all at sea.

They rode the subway to the Bronx. He returned her to her door with his cigarette locked between his lips. And then, with a thieving and frightened motion she would suffer over for the rest of her life (it was bold, almost savage), she put her hand

to his mouth and snatched away the cigarette and dropped it on the corridor floor. Her little finger grazed his upper lip: she had touched his flesh. His look was darker than surprise. Instantly she was thrown down into humiliation. She had lost him; she had lost him. She held out her hand for goodnight, but he was already fixed on the elevator across the hall.

It was the beginning of her education. She went back to the library and found a textbook called *The Enjoyment of*

Music and sat down with it grimly, like a zealot. She studied the elements of the orchestra—strings, woodwinds, brasses, percussion instruments. She read up on style, from Gregorian chant all the way through to the post-Romantics. She learned about key and scale, about transposition, modulation, chromaticism, dissonance, counterpoint; she allowed herself to be swept away by the idea of fugue, oratorio, chamber music, opera, a cappella, symphony, concerto, chorale. She accumulated names: Scarlatti, Berlioz, Schumann, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, Mendelssohn; she fell into the lives of Mozart and Mussorgsky.

She neglected her courses and toiled for a week. And all the while she never heard a note. She could not recall any part of the concert in Carnegie Hall: she had been preoccupied with Emil's listening—how he took a breath, how he tilted his face, how he surrendered to the sounds, whatever they were. He understood the sounds; she could not. Behind his shut eyes they rushed riverlike, ravishing; she saw him flooded with their peculiar code and tattoo and swell. But she was ignorant and deprived. There was no music in her head. Her head was a chamberless nautilus, incapable of echo.

She memorized a whole stanza of Bach's Cantata No. 80, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*, and copied out into her notebook choral fugue, *D major, 4/4, 3 trumpets, timpani, 2 oboes, first and second violins, violas, and continuo (cello, brasses, organ)*. It was all mind stuff. She never thought to get hold of a recording, and anyhow, she was impatient. She was studying in order to write to Emil; he could not turn away from a letter about music. She would tell him she was catching up; the next concert wouldn't be Greek to her. And besides, she intended to write him in the language of Bach and of Emil's own childhood in Frankfurt am Main.

So Puttermesser wrote Emil Hauchvogel a letter in her college German. She was certain it would contain mistakes. She hoped he would overlook them and be charmed—or, if he declined to be charmed, he would at least see how seriously she was attending to his instruction: *You should learn something about music*.

She wrote, "Truly there would be reason to go mad if it were not for music." It was Tchaikovsky translated into German. Next to it she wrote, "*Das ist doch Du!*"

There was no immediate reply. She believed he was ignoring her: she had offended him with that lunatic gesture of the cigarette. It was torn from his mouth; his lip had felt her little finger—when she had meant only to free him to say his goodnight as she shook his hand. But, oh, the clumsiness of it, the frightened, aggressive stupidity of her clumsiness! He imagined that she was soliciting a kiss. A kiss! Never! They were formal and tentative friends—he was her teacher—in a formal and tentative friendship that decayed at the touch of her little finger.

After three weeks his answer came. He wrote fluently, in his ready, familial German, and said nothing about her mis-

takes. At first she thought, *Aha, so there weren't any*. How meticulous she had been, how she had labored to winnow them out! But that was only her vanity, her ambition, her desire; she quickly recognized that he was indifferent. He had meant the hiatus to speak for itself. He told her that it was a fine thing, this opening of her life to the glories of music; she would be enriched forever. As for *dem nächsten Konzert*, what bad luck—he was overburdened with term papers and course work and couldn't possibly leave his desk. *Mein Tisch*, he called it, as if it were an ordinary table and not a desk at all. That made her think of the sticky soda-glass rings on the table at Howard Johnson's, how he had doused his cigarette butt in his cup, how she had refused to go to a bar (what was the matter with her, she was nineteen!), how unpolished she must seem to him, how she had knocked his cigarette right out of his mouth, how stupid she was! (Though now she was capable of defining a fugue.)

Mein Tisch: she envisioned him at a vast seminar table, the youngest of the great philosophers, a polymath, a genius, an atheist.

When, in after years, she learned of Emil Hauchvogel's wedding, the pang that struck her chest vibrated like some wild interior gong. His wife, she heard, was a cellist; his little daughters were precociously, ferociously, musical.



IN Paradise she married him.

She had long ago given up the idea of an ethics indebted to some hypothesis of divinity. She didn't care anymore about God. She was obsessed with organ music, its heavy majestic ascent, its heavy molasses fall.

In Paradise, Emil was invited to sit at Kant's *Tisch*. Sometimes Wittgenstein and Quine were there. Once—what an occasion *that* was!—Plato turned up.

"What does he look like?" Puttermesser asked. She touched her little finger to Emil's mouth and let him kiss it.

"Short fellow. Big head, big nose, translucent ears, the usual poetic brow," Emil said. "Frequently meets with Maimonides. Tells me he's starting on Talmud, though he finds it a bit disorganized. Compared with his own stuff."

"What color eyes?"

"That's a funny thing to want to know."

"But what color *are* they?"

"White," Emil said. "All white."

"You don't mean he's blind?" The moment she said this she knew she was being preposterous. In Paradise sight and insight are equally acute. Nowhere can one more easily thread a needle or grasp a point.

"It snows inside his eyes. You look in and it's always snowing there, like a pure-white field."

In Paradise, Puttermesser gave birth at last. The child's skin was silken gold. They circumcised him and planted the tiny gold foreskin under an olive tree, and every olive on every branch began to take on the color of gold. And when all

New Poetry Contest

\$48,000.00 in Prizes

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to award 250
total prizes to
amateur poets
in coming months*

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“We’re especially looking for poems from new or unpublished poets,” indicated Howard Ely, spokesperson for The National Library of Poetry. “We have a ten year history of awarding large prizes to talented poets who have never before won any type of writing competition.”

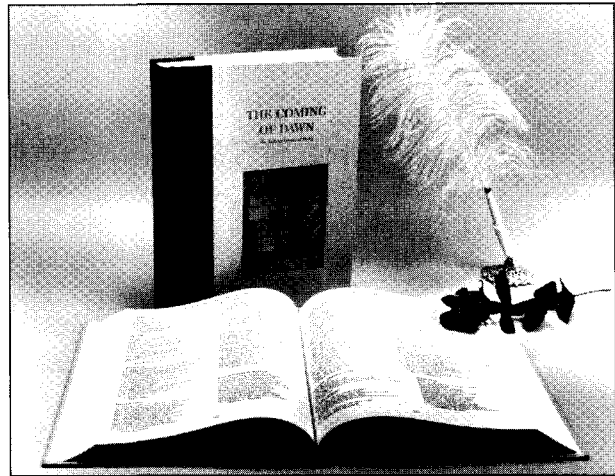
How To Enter

Anyone may enter the competition simply by sending in **ONLY ONE** original poem, any subject, any style, to:

**The National Library of Poetry
P.O. Box 350-1499
Stevenson, MD 21153**

Or enter online at www.poetry.com

The poem should be no more than 20 lines, and the poet’s name and address must appear on the top of the page. “All poets who enter will receive a response concerning their artistry, usually within seven weeks,” indicated Mr. Ely.



*The National Library of Poetry publishes the work of amateur poets in colorful hardbound anthologies like **The Coming of Dawn**, pictured above. Each volume features poetry by a diverse mix of poets from all over the world.*

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Enter online at www.poetry.com

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the olives had turned gold, the snow in Plato's eyes stopped, and his eyes were as gold as the olives on their branches.

In Paradise, Puttermesser was happy—in her brain and in her heart, in her womb and in all her sexual parts.

But there is a flaw in Eden. The flaw is not what the stories tell us: there is no serpent. All the fruit trees are safe to eat from. There is no expulsion; there is no angel with a flaming sword. All those are children's tales. Timeless Eden is as sweet as Puttermesser and a million million others before her have imagined. In Paradise all yearnings become fact. All desires come to pass. And in every instance the fulfillment exceeds the dream.

In Paradise, Puttermesser is happy, oh, happy!—in her sexual parts, in the golden beauty of her child, in the gold of Plato's eyes, and in the newest heat of her mind, which is everything it was not at nineteen. In Paradise, Emil whispers to her about her mind: how impressive, how effective, her thinking is. He kisses her little finger and calls her a Satrap of Thought. He calls Maimonides the Sovereign of Thought. He calls Kant the Emperor of Thought. He calls Beethoven the God of Thought. (In Paradise, God is admissible, even for Emil.)

Flaw? No, there is no flaw in Paradise. That is a vestige of Puttermesser's obsolete terrestrial notions. Paradise surely has no flaw; but it has its secret. (PRDS, you will recall, ends in *sod*.) *Sod*: the secret meaning of Paradise! And alas for Puttermesser: she will now uncover it. It is integral to, coextensive with, the very grain of Eden, which is timelessness. Timelessness does not promise the permanence of any experience. Where there is no time, there is no endurance. Without the measure of clocks, what is lastingness?

If Puttermesser had married Emil Hauchvogel in ordinary life—if he had kissed her at her door, if a courtship had followed, and so on and so on—then it would be possible to calculate that the marriage “lasted” a certain number of years. But in the everlastingness of Paradise what does it signify to say how long anything lasts?

In Paradise, where sight and insight, inner and outer, sweet and salt, logic and illogic, are shuffled in the manner of a kaleidoscope, nothing is permanent. Nothing will stay. All is ephemeral. There is no long and no short; there is only immeasurable isness. Isness alone is forever—or name it essence, or soul. But the images within the soul shift, drift, wander. Paradise is a dream bearing the inscription on Solomon's seal: *This, too, will pass*.

And that is the secret meaning of Paradise: Solomon's truth. It is the other reason for the notorious coldheartedness of Paradise. It is why everyone who is supernally happy in Paradise, happier than ever before, will soon become preternaturally unhappy, unhappier than ever before. A dream that flowers only to be undone will bring more misery than a dream that has never come true at all.

The secret meaning of Paradise is that it, too, is Hell.

SO it is with Puttermesser in Paradise. Emil and her little son evaporate; in sorrow she watches them pale like ink under water. Inconsolably, in her old familiar solitude, she walks through neighborhoods of illusion and phantasmagoria, witnessing loss and tragedy and heart-break—each following a great and joyous victory.

She sees Henry James, the Master, growing rich on the triumph of a play, the very play that once failed humiliatingly on the London boards; but she already knows (as the Master himself will soon know) that paradisaal success will end in jeers and feebleness.

She sees elation dissipate and ignominy conquer.

She sees the divinely palpable Dickens celebrated in every corner of Eden. Then she sees him led back, a grown man, to the blacking factory where the boy had suffered.

She sees a hooked fish returned to dread: her father's life tossed back to the Czar.

She sees the alphabet fleeing from having been invented.

She sees infants searching for the wombs that had expelled them.

She sees Science longing for Alchemy.

She sees a bearded young man clutching a book of the history of humankind, weeping because he has been made into a godhead; she sees him mourning the deadly fruit of his apotheosis.

Remorse coats the celestial streets with a remorseless ash, as white as the snow that has returned to the sockets of Plato's lost eyes. Every display of splendor is matched by the debilitation of decay. She sees the towers of civilizations gleam and fade. She sees infatuations wither. She sees small heaps of char: the embers of tremendous loves, loves as famous as Dido and Aeneas, or Rachel and Akiba. She sees ambition's lofty campaniles dwindling into resignation and defeat.

Puttermesser, whose name means nothing more troublesome than “butter-cutter,” walks through the white ash of Paradise, herself a shadow though casting none, and longs for the plain green earth.

She has seen into the *sod* of *pardes*, so this is what she sings:

At the point of a knife

I lost my life.

*Butter, butter, butter,
butter knife.*

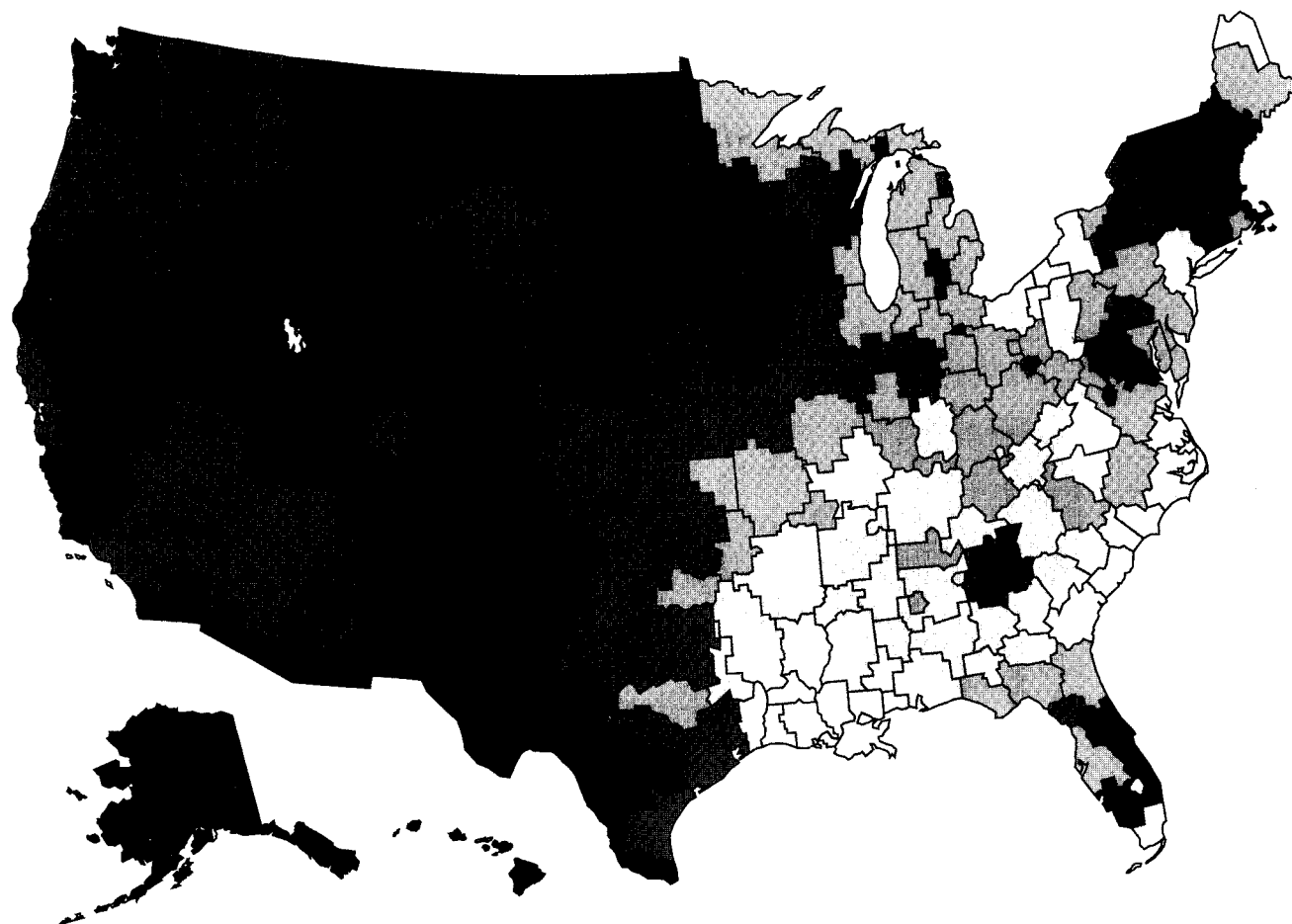
If I were alive I wouldn't fault
anything under the heavenly vault.

*Better, better, better,
better life.*

Better never to have loved than loved at all.
Better never to have risen than had a fall.

*Oh, bitter, bitter, bitter
butter
knife. ☞*

The Salsa Sectors



LIKE stir-fry and bagels, salsa has gone mainstream. The growing appetite for salsa and other spicy Mexican sauces—salsa recently surpassed catsup as America’s best-selling condiment, with annual sales of \$700 million—has made an unusual migration in the United States, as seen in this map of the nation’s 212 television markets. Whereas most culinary trends begin in the large coastal metropolitan areas and creep inward to the heartland, salsa has its roots among rural Latinos in the Southwest and has spread north and east. This pattern bucks the usual “proletarian drift,” whereby first upscale urbanites become enamored of a new product, such as Starbucks’ coffee, and then, in time, even the most isolated market in Appalachia is selling caffè latte.

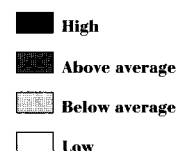
Demographic surveys show that salsa consumers tend to be of two types: downscale Latino families, for whom salsa (Spanish for “sauce”) is a staple, and upscale Anglo families, who can afford to buy a condiment that is more expensive than catsup and who appreciate salsa’s low fat content.

As a group, salsa aficionados are more likely to be married

than single and rural than urban. Salsa is probably more popular among families than among singles because larger households do more cooking at home. This is also a reason why salsa sales are not high in the nation’s big cities, where singles, who eat out regularly, make up a large proportion of residents. Another reason is that salsa is not particularly popular with African-Americans, who tend to prefer sweeter, tangier flavors.

Although the map does generally reflect the settlement patterns of the Latino population in the United States, there are several anomalies. For example, two centers of Latino settlement, Miami and New York, have relatively low rates of salsa consumption; salsa is not as popular among Latinos of Cuban or Puerto Rican descent as among those from Mexico or Central America. —Michael J. Weiss

Salsa-buying population
(U.S. average = 21.8
percent of all households)



Source: Claritas Inc.
Mediamark Research Inc.

The Man Who Counts the Killings

by SCOTT STOSSEL



George Gerbner, who thirty years ago founded the Cultural Indicators project, which is best known for its estimate that the average American child will have watched 8,000 murders on television by the age of twelve, is so alarmed about the baneful effects of TV that he describes them in terms of "fascism"

IN the unlikely event that a major Hollywood studio were to make a movie based on the life of George Gerbner, it might go something like this:

A passionate young Hungarian poet, dismayed by the rise of fascism in his country in the late 1930s, emigrates to America.

Cut to 1942. The ex-poet, motivated by his hatred of fascism, enlists in the U.S. Army. He volunteers for the Office of Strategic Services and ends up in a group of fifteen men trained, like William Holden and his comrades in *The Bridge*

on the *River Kwai*, in the techniques of blowing up bridges and roads.

Cut to January 15, 1945—a sabotage mission gone awry. The young man and his OSS comrades, under heavy fire over Slovenia, parachute into enemy territory. They climb into the mountains and hide in farmhouses, subsisting on emergency rations until they encounter the partisan brigades, with whom they spend the remainder of the war fighting Germans who are in retreat from Greece.

The war takes a bloody toll on the young man's brigade;

by V-E Day it has been reduced from 400 men to seventy. But the Allies prevail. And the ex-poet, now a war hero, falls in love. Roll credits: the camera freezes on George and Ilona Gerbner embracing on the deck of their New York-bound ship.

In the more imaginable yet still unlikely event that an independent production company were to make a film based on the life of George Gerbner, it might go something like this:

After the Second World War, in the course of which he has seen enough violence, suffering, and pain to harden even the softest sensibility, and during which he has personally identified and arrested the fascist Hungarian Prime Minister, who is subsequently executed, a brooding Hungarian poet travels with his wife to America. He earns a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California, in the process writing the first-ever master's thesis on the subject of education and television, and begins a long career in academia studying the effects of television on its viewers. In 1964 he becomes the dean of the newly founded Annenberg School of Communication, at the University of Pennsylvania, where he builds a curriculum and a faculty from scratch. In 1989, after twenty-five years as dean, George Gerbner retires.

This second film might concentrate on Gerbner's recent activities. Now seventy-seven years old, he is free to pursue more or less full-time what has been a longtime project of his: trying to awaken television viewers from their stupefaction. Television, Gerbner believes, is modern-day religion. It presents a coherent vision of the world. And this vision of the world, he says, is violent, mean, repressive, dangerous—and inaccurate. Television programming is the toxic by-product of market forces run amok. Television has the capacity to be a culturally enriching force, but, Gerbner warns, today it breeds what fear and resentment mixed with economic frustration can lead to—the undermining of democracy.

Though in general respected within his field, Gerbner is misunderstood, misrepresented, and even mocked outside it. Network executives make what sound like commonsense dismissals of his Cassandra-esque claims. The central question of this film might be, What are we to make of this complex man and his provocative message?

Is Gerbner tilting at windmills? Is he just a mediaphobe with a quixotic message? Or is he a lonely voice of insight, telling us things that are hard to comprehend but that we need to hear if we are to remain free from repression? Right or wrong, is his crusade at bottom a futile one? Do we need to change television programming, and if so, how can we do it? After all, network executives say, viewers are simply getting what they want. The film might end with a shot of a gaunt George Gerbner quoting, as he often does, the toast of Russian dissidents under Soviet rule: "Now let us drink to the success of our hopeless endeavor."

Violence and Television:

A History

IN 1977 Ronny Zamora, a fifteen-year-old, shot and killed the eighty-two-year-old woman who lived next door to him in Florida. Not guilty, pleaded his lawyer, Ellis Rubin, by reason of the boy's having watched too much television. From watching television Ronny had become dangerously injured to violence. Suffering from what Rubin called "television intoxication," he could no longer tell right from wrong. "If you judge Ronny Zamora guilty," Rubin argued, "television will be an accessory." The jury demurred: Ronny was convicted of first-degree murder.

Although few anti-television activists would agree that excessive television viewing can exculpate a murderer, a huge body of evidence—including 3,000 studies before 1971 alone—suggests a strong connection between television watching and aggression. "There is no longer any serious debate about whether violence in the media is a legitimate problem," Reed Hundt, the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, said in a speech last year. "Science and commonsense judgments of parents agree. As stated in a year-long effort, funded by the cable-TV industry . . . 'there are substantial risks of harmful effects from viewing violence throughout the television environment.'"

The study cited by Hundt reveals nothing new. Researchers have been churning out studies indicating links between television violence and real-life violence for as long as television has been a prominent feature of American culture. Just a few examples demonstrate the range of the investigations.

- A 1956 study compared the behavior of twelve four-year-olds who watched a Woody Woodpecker cartoon containing many violent episodes with that of twelve other four-year-olds who watched "The Little Red Hen," a nonviolent cartoon. The Woody watchers were much more likely than the Hen watchers to hit other children, break toys, and be generally destructive during playtime.
- In 1981 Brandon Centerwall, a professor of epidemiology at the University of Washington, hypothesized that the sharp increase in the murder rate in North America beginning in 1955 was the product of television viewing. Television sets had been common household appliances for about eight years by that point—enough time, he theorized, to have inculcated violent tendencies in a generation of viewers. He tested his hypothesis by studying the effects of television in South Africa, where the Afrikaaner-dominated regime had banned it until 1975. He found that twelve years after television was introduced there, murder rates skyrocketed.
- In 1960 Leonard Eron, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research, studied third-graders in Columbia County in semi-rural New York. He observed that the more violent television these eight-year-olds

watched at home, the more aggressive they were in school. Eron returned to Columbia County in 1971, when the children from his sample were nineteen. He found that the boys who had watched a lot of violent television when they were eight were more likely to get in trouble with the law when older. Eron returned to Columbia County a third time in 1982, when his subjects were thirty. He discovered that those who had watched the most television violence at age eight inflicted more violent punishments on their children, were convicted of more serious crimes, and were reported more aggressive by their spouses than those who had watched less violent television. In 1993, at a conference of the National Council for Families & Television, Eron estimated that 10 percent of the violence in the United States can be attributed to television.

Although Eron's study did not make a special effort to control for other potentially violence-inducing variables, other longitudinal studies have done so. For example, in 1971 Monroe Lefkowitz published "Television Violence and Child Aggression: A Follow-up Study," which confirmed that the more violence an eight-year-old boy watched, the more aggressive his behavior would be at age eighteen. Lefkowitz controlled for other possible variables, directly implicating media violence as an instigator of violent behavior.

Shouldn't the weight of thousands of such studies be sufficient to persuade broadcasters, required by law since the 1930s to serve the public interest, to change the content of television programming? Especially when polls—such as one conducted by *U.S. News & World Report* last year—indicate that 90 percent of Americans think that violent television shows hurt the country? We don't want to become a nation of Ronny Zamoras, do we?

Periods of increasing popular agitation about the effects of television on children (usually inspired by a rising crime rate or by a sensational story like Ronny Zamora's) lead to spasms of political posturing. Studies are commissioned. Imminent legislative or regulatory action is threatened. The broadcast industry filibusters. Within a few months the politicians turn their attention to something new, and the broadcasting industry slips quietly away, barely chastened.

Since 1968, when President Lyndon Johnson convened the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, commissions, hearings, and a Surgeon General's report have all found that television is a "major contributory factor" in violent behavior in society.

"A Telegenic Little Gizmo"

THE latest burst of activity around the issue of television violence, culminating in the legislating of the V-chip, can be traced to a night in the mid-1980s when a weary Senator Paul Simon, of Illinois, lying in his motel bed, flipped on the television and saw, in graphic detail, a man being sliced in half with a chain saw—a victim, Si-

mon's staff later surmised, of Colombian drug dealers in *Scarface*. Appalled that there was nothing to prevent a child from witnessing such grisliness, Simon urged the passage of a law reducing gore on television.

The result, the 1990 Television Violence Act, was a compromise between the broadcasting industry and those who, like Simon, wanted somehow to reduce the violence on shows that children might be watching. Ordinarily, antitrust laws prohibit broadcast networks from collaborating, but Simon's proposal gave the networks a three-year exemption from the laws so that they could jointly work out a policy to curb violence. Though Simon hailed the announcement of the networks (except Fox), in December of 1992, of a set of guidelines governing television violence, this basically toothless bit of legislation had little effect until it was about to expire, at which point network executives promised that they would place parental advisories at the beginning of violent programs ("Due to violent content, parental discretion is advised"). When the act expired, in December of 1993, television was as violent as ever.

Meanwhile, in Canada, the invention of a Vancouver engineer had come to the attention of Keith Spicer, then the chairman of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (Canada's FCC equivalent). This invention—in Spicer's words, a "sexy, telegenic little gizmo that fulfills the fantasy of a magic wand" and could solve the problem of television violence without censorship—was the V-chip, the basic rationale for which is by now generally known. Using the chip, which receives encoded information about each show as part of the broadcast transmission, parents can program their television to block out shows that have been coded as violent or sexually explicit. Spicer championed the V-chip and ultimately got a law passed mandating its use in all new television sets sold in Canada.

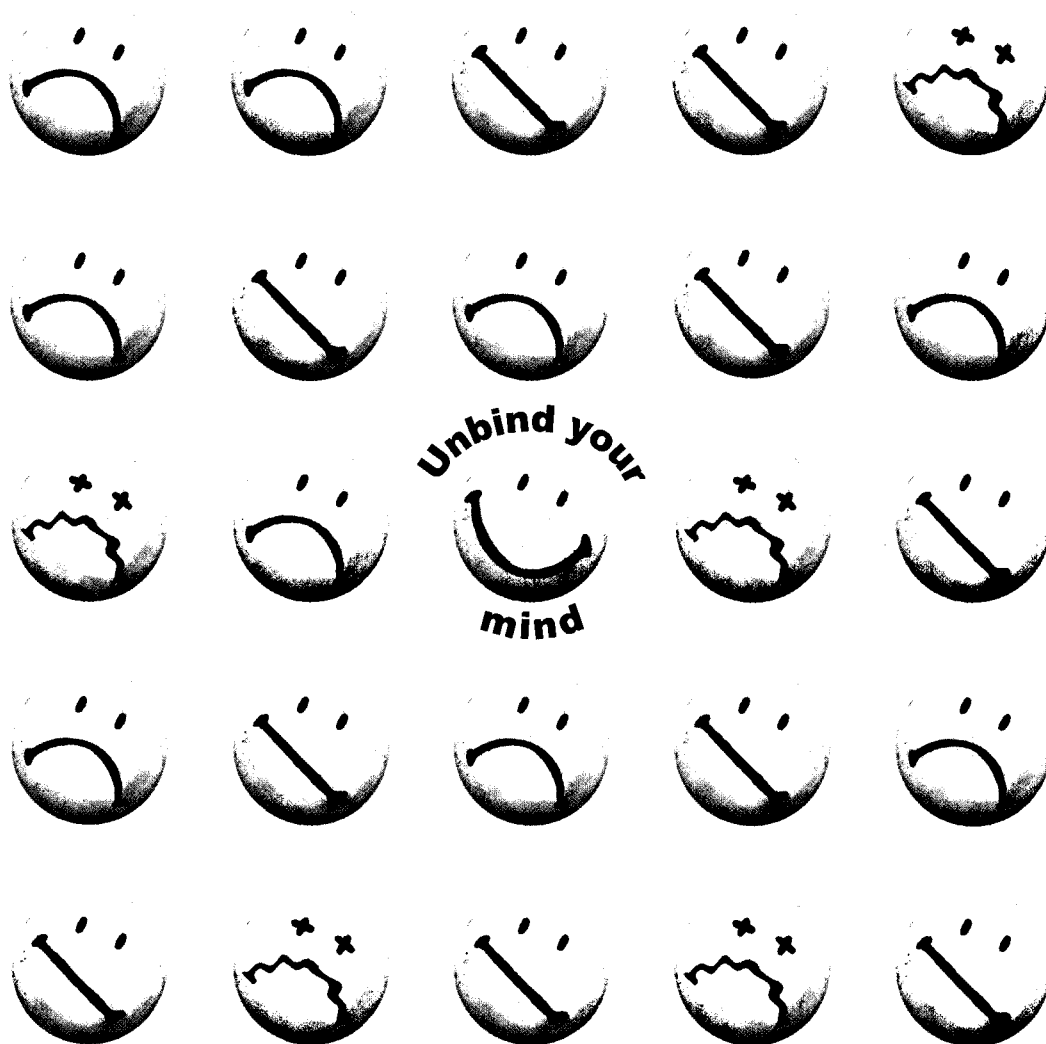
After the Television Violence Act expired, Representative Edward J. Markey, of Massachusetts, introduced legislation requiring manufacturers to install the V-chip in all U.S. television sets. President Bill Clinton extolled the V-chip in his State of the Union Address last year, and then signed its use into law as part of the mammoth 1996 Telecommunications Act. As of February of next year all new television sets (Americans buy 24 million of them a year) must have the chip. Meanwhile, the broadcasting industry has established a rating system to be employed in conjunction with the chip, age-based like the system used by the Motion Picture Association of America.

Is the V-chip, after all these years, the solution we've been looking for? The "gizmo" that will protect our children from damaging cultural content? Clearly, not everyone thinks so. British opponents of the chip dismissed it early last year, saying it was a "knee-jerk solution" that would impede solving real problems. And criminologists in the United States say that children will circumvent the V-chip—after all, kids are better at programming VCRs than their parents are.

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But the real problem, according to George Gerbner, is that all this hullabaloo over the V-chip, and over television violence in general, misses the point. The chip, though it's the result of good intentions, can do nothing to alleviate television's most complex and insidious effects.

2,605 Violent Acts a Day

IN 1968 President Johnson's National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence appointed Gerbner, who had already been studying violence in the media at the Annenberg School, to analyze the content of television shows. Thus began the Cultural Indicators project, the longest-running continuous media-research undertaking in the world. Gerbner and his team presented findings about both the quantity of violence on prime-time television—that is, how many violent acts are committed each night—and the quality. In analyzing these acts Gerbner's team asked questions like Was it serious or funny? Was it the only method of conflict resolution offered? Were realistic repercussions of violence shown? Who committed most of it? Who suffered the most because of it? The quantity of violence on television was stunning; no less significant to Gerbner, though, were the ways in which this violence was portrayed. But in the first instance of what has since become a frustrating pattern for him, the mainstream media seized on the quantity and ignored his findings about the quality of television violence.

The media continue to be fixated on the amount of violence the Cultural Indicators project finds, because the numbers are staggering. Today someone settling down to watch television is likely to witness a veritable carnival of violent behavior. On average there are more than five violent scenes in an hour of prime time, and five murders a night. There are twenty-five violent acts an hour in Saturday-morning cartoons—the programs most watched by children, usually without any supervision. And that's only network television. A survey by the Center for Media and Public Affairs that looked at all programming—including cable—in Washington, D.C., on April 7, 1994, tallied 2,605 acts of violence that day, the majority occurring in the early morning, when kids were most likely to be watching. By the reckoning of the Cultural Indicators project, the average American child will have witnessed more than 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts on television by the time he or she leaves elementary school. Another study, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in 1992, found that the typical American child spends twenty-seven hours a week watching television and will witness 40,000 murders and 200,000 other violent acts by the age of eighteen. Ellis Rubin's defense of Ronny Zamora begins to sound plausible.

"Never was a culture so filled with full-color images of violence as ours is now," Gerbner wrote recently. This is an

assertion he makes often, in his writings and speeches and interviews.

Of course, there is blood in fairy tales, gore in mythology, murder in Shakespeare, lurid crimes in tabloids, and battles and wars in textbooks. Such representations of violence are legitimate cultural expressions, even necessary to balance tragic consequences against deadly compulsions. But the historically defined, individually crafted, and selectively used symbolic violence of heroism, cruelty, or authentic tragedy has been replaced by the violence with happy endings produced on the dramatic assembly line.

The Cultural Indicators project has since 1968 amassed a database of reports on the recurring features of television programming. Today its archive contains observations on more than 3,000 programs and 35,000 characters. In looking at characters, coders record, among other characteristics, sex, race, height, level of aggressiveness, and drug, alcohol, or tobacco use. For every conflict the coder records how the character acts: Did he get angry? How did he resolve the conflict? If a character is part of a violent act, the coder records whether he suffered or committed it, and whether it was committed in self-defense. The results are then analyzed statistically to try to account for differences in the behavioral trends of the characters. Are there statistically significant differences in the percentage of, say, victimhood or alcohol abuse by sex? By level of education? By race? By social status?

In addition to this "message system analysis," Gerbner's researchers do "cultivation analysis," which tries to measure how much television contributes to viewers' conceptions of reality. Cultivation analysis asks, in other words, to what extent television "cultivates" our understanding of the world. Gerbner believes this to be the most important aspect of his research. It is also the part routinely ignored by the mainstream press and attacked by the broadcasting industry.

One of the basic premises of Gerbner's cultivation analysis is that television violence is not simple acts but rather "a complex social scenario of power and victimization." What matters is not so much the raw fact that a violent act is committed but who does what to whom. Gerbner is as insistent about this as he is about anything, repeating it in all his writings and speeches. "What is the message of violence?" he asks me rhetorically over tea in his office at the University of Pennsylvania, a cozy, windowless rectangle filled with books, pictures, and objets d'art. "Who can get away with what against whom?" He leans forward intently, as though confiding something, although he has already said this to me several other times, during several other conversations. His eagerness to make me understand is palpable. "The media keep focusing on the amount of violence. But concentrating on that reinforces the message of violence. It concentrates on the law-and-order aspect of violence. Harping on this all the time makes people more fearful—which is the purpose of violence to begin with."

"The Mean World Syndrome"

SO what, exactly, has nearly thirty years of cultivation analysis shown? Among other things, the following:

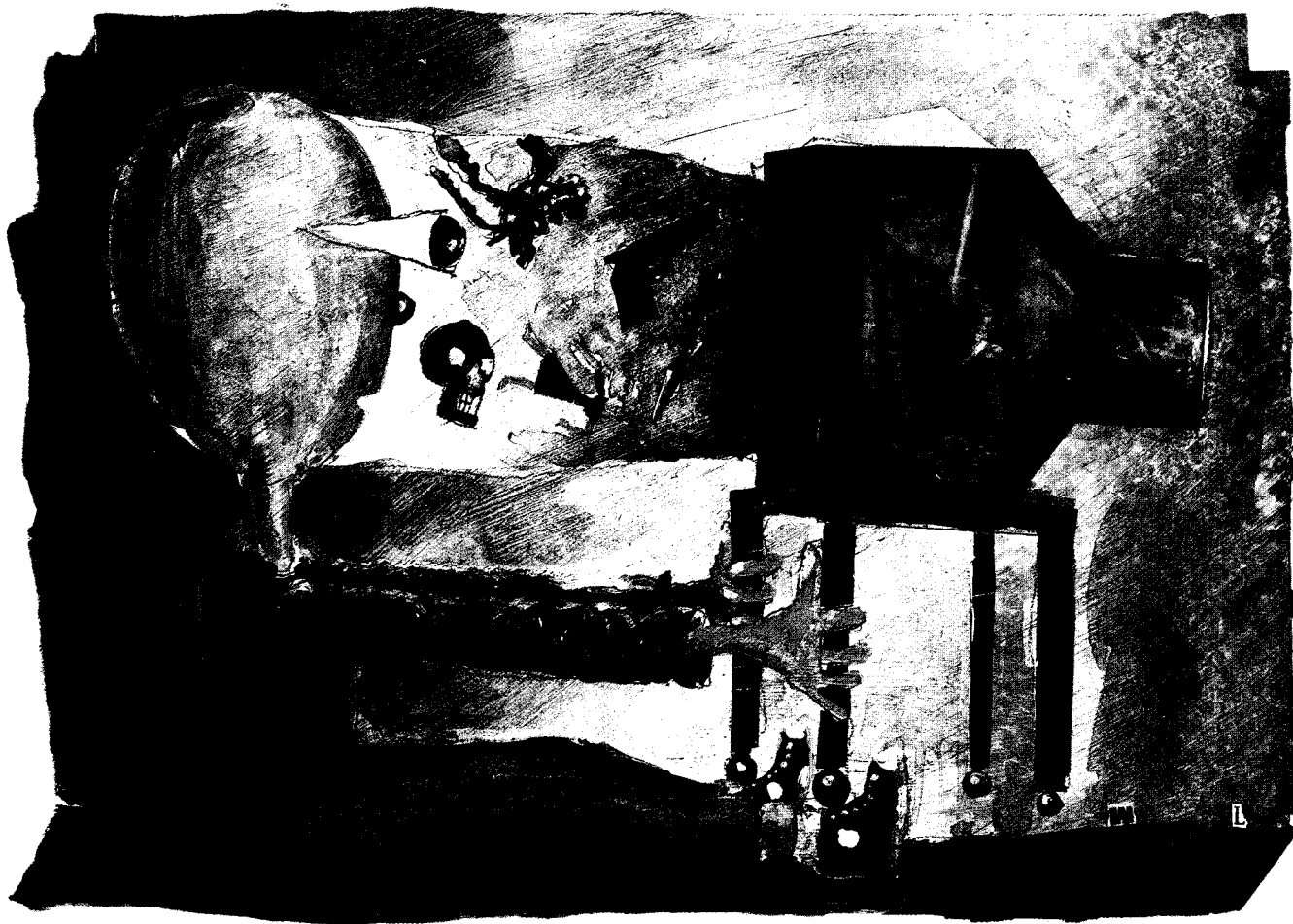
- Americans spend fully a third of their free time with television. This is more than the next ten highest-ranked leisure-time activities put together.

- Women make up a third or less of the characters in all samples except daytime serials.

- The "lower classes" are almost invisible on television. According to the U.S. Census, at least 13 percent of the population is "poor," with a significant additional percent-

- Villains are disproportionately male, lower-class, young, and Latino or foreign.

What is the significance of all this? First, the sheer quantity of violence on television encourages the idea that aggressive behavior is normal. Viewers become desensitized. The mind, as Gerbner puts it, becomes "militarized." This leads to what Gerbner calls "the Mean World Syndrome." Because television depicts the world as worse than it is (at least for white suburbanites), we become fearful and anxious—and more willing to depend on authorities, strong measures, gated communities, and other proto-police-state accouterments. Discounting the dramatic increase in violent



age being classified as "low-income wage-earners." Yet the lower classes make up only 1.3 percent of prime-time characters.

- For every white male victim of violence there are seventeen white female victims.

- For every white male victim there are twenty-two minority female victims.

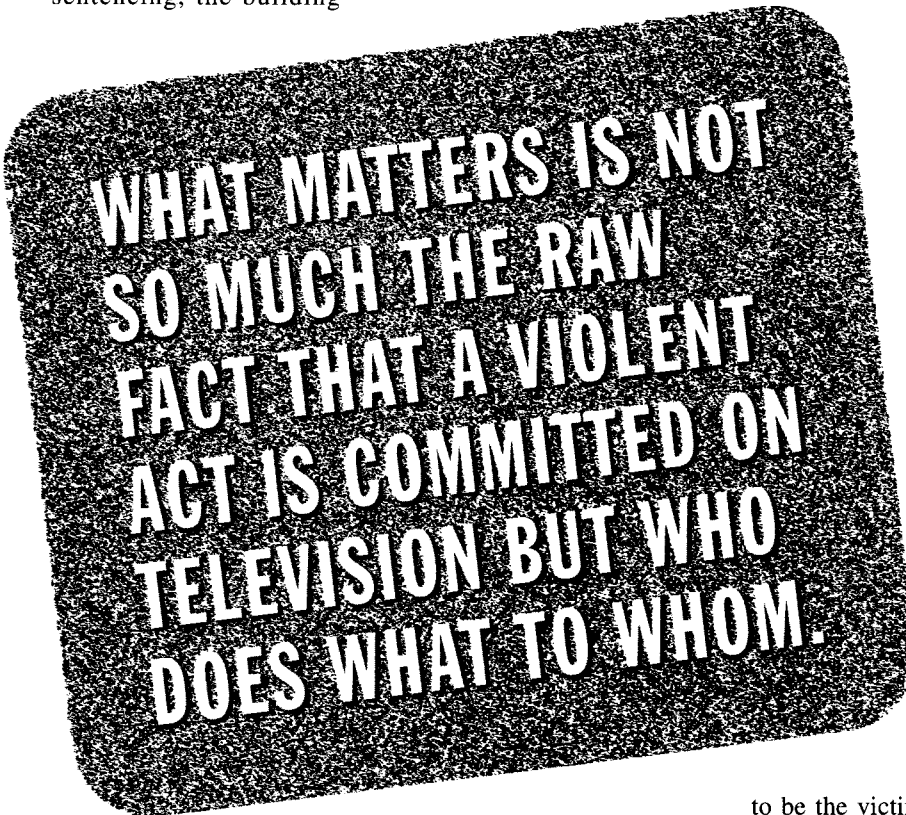
- For every ten female aggressors there are sixteen female victims.

- Minority women are twice as likely to be victims as they are to be aggressors.

crime in the real world, Gerbner believes, for example, that the Mean World Syndrome is an important reason that the majority of Americans now support capital punishment, whereas they did not thirty years ago. "Growing up in a violence-laden culture breeds aggressiveness in some and desensitization, insecurity, mistrust, and anger in most," he writes. "Punitive and vindictive action against dark forces in a mean world is made to look appealing, especially when presented as quick, decisive, and enhancing our sense of control and security."

The more violence one sees on television, the more one

feels threatened by violence. Studies have shown direct correlations between the quantity of television watched and general fearfulness about the world: heavy viewers believe the world to be much more dangerous than do light viewers. Thus heavy viewers tend to favor more law-and-order measures: capital punishment, three-strikes prison sentencing, the building



of new prisons, and so forth. And the fact that most of the heavy viewers are in low-income, low-education families means that the most disenfranchised in our society—and, it should be said, the people most exposed to real violence—are making themselves even more so by placing their fate in the hands of an increasingly martial state. Politicians exploit this violence-cultivated sensibility by couching their favored policies in militaristic terms: the War on Crime, for example, or the War on Drugs. “We are headed in the direction of an upsurge in neofascism in a very entertaining and very amusing disguise,” Gerbner told a lecture audience in Toronto two years ago.

The first time I talked to Gerbner after reading his writings, I asked him if this wasn’t all a bit Big Brotherish. “TV images are complex,” he told me. “The disempowering effects of television lead to neofascism. That kind of thing is waiting in the wings. Nazi Germany came on the heels of a basic sense of insecurity and powerlessness like we have here now. I don’t want to oversimplify, but that is the direction we might be heading.”

Violence, Gerbner says, is all about power. The violence on television serves as a lesson of power that puts people in

their place. Members of minority groups grow up feeling that they’re more vulnerable than others. Television cultivates this view. But, I counter, minorities *are* more vulnerable. They are victims more often than middle-class white Americans are. Improving the depiction of minorities on television will not change this social fact.

Gerbner strives to clarify: “Television doesn’t ‘cause’ anything. We’re wary of saying television ‘causes’ this or that. Instead we say television ‘contributes’ to this or that. The extent of contribution varies. But it’s there.”

Elsewhere Gerbner is less circumspect. “The violence we see on the screen and read about in our press bears little relationship either in volume or in type, especially in its consequences, to violence in real life,” he has written. “This sleight of hand robs us of the tragic sense of life necessary for compassion.” No doubt a victim of the Mean World Syndrome myself, I was surprised to learn that Gerbner is absolutely right, at least about the volume of violence. Scary and crime-ridden though the world is these days (violent crime has more than doubled over the past thirty years; an American is six times as likely

to be the victim of assault with a weapon as he or she would have been in 1960), prime-time television presents a world in which crime rates are a hundred times worse.

Why Sex Doesn’t Interest Gerbner

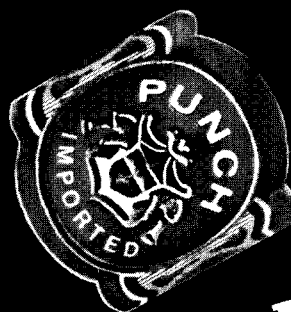
THE Cultural Indicators project does not generally publish statistics about sexual encounters on television. But the aggregate number of sexual references or images on television rivals the number of violent acts. The Center for Population Options, for example, determined that the typical teenager sees nearly 14,000 sexual encounters on television *every* year. And few of these encounters can be said to promote traditional family values. A study by the conservative Media Research Center found that portrayals of premarital sex outnumber portrayals of sex within marriage by eight to one. Why isn’t this sort of thing of greater interest to Gerbner?

Given that Gerbner’s background is European (in particular the Frankfurt School tradition, which taught the dangers of the control of the masses by ideological cultural content), and given that his outlook is in many ways political, it is unsurprising that sex is not his overriding concern. While exploring the mechanical, passionless athletic contortions that

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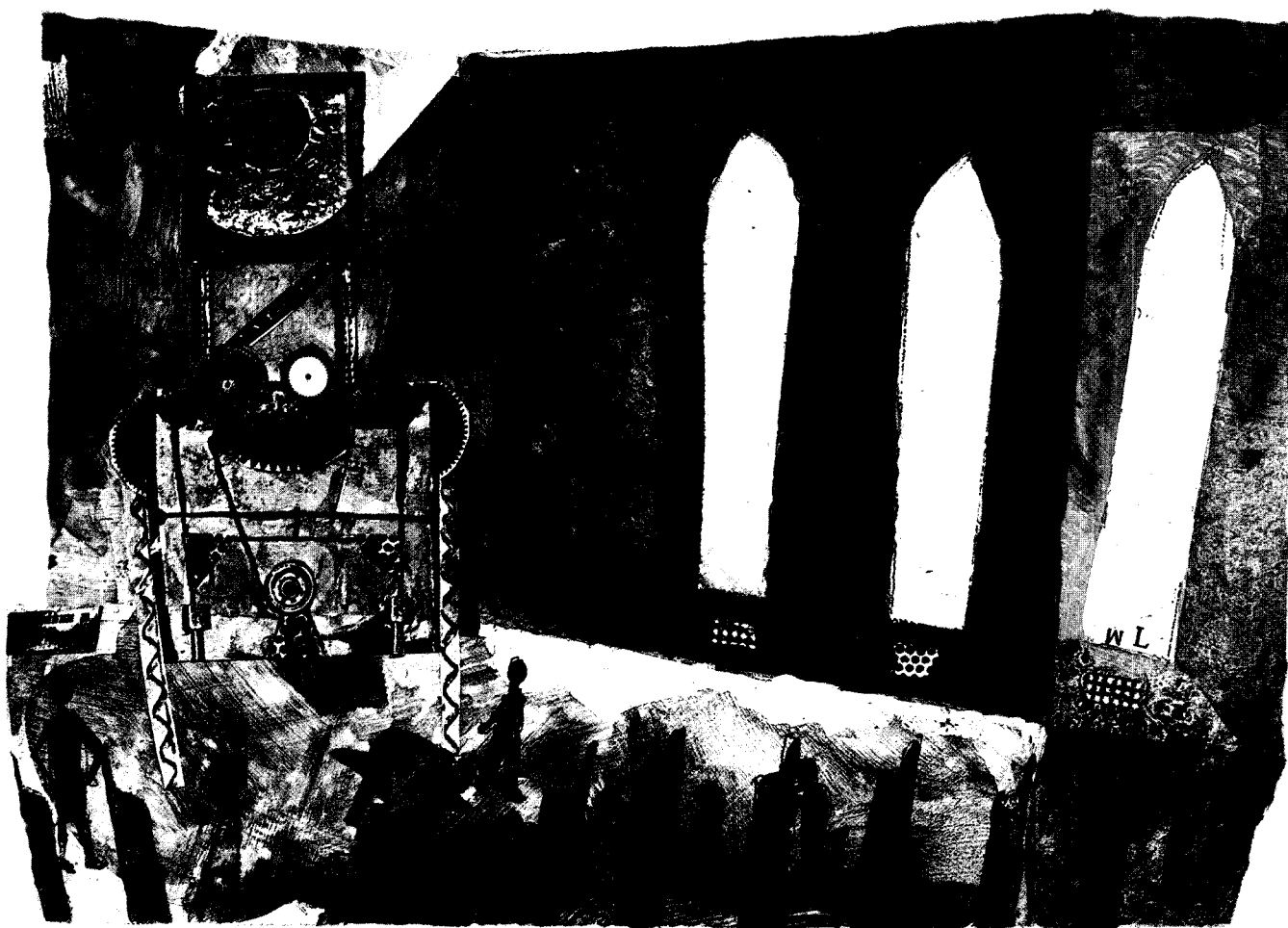
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pass for sex in Hollywood movies these days, Gerbner believes that the politics of sex in culture (except when force or violence is also involved) are less sinister than the politics of violence. "Most countries have codes about violence, not about sex," he says. "For us it is the other way around. We have a rather prudish and misguided sense of ratings."

Though other countries share our concerns about violence in culture (France, for example, strictly regulates shows that combine violent and erotic content and might be psychologically disturbing to children), Europeans generally have more liberal attitudes toward sex than Americans. Cultural theorists and policymakers from Europe and Canada see it as an

between the cultural concerns of the two countries, across whose borders broadcast transmissions freely move.

What seems to concern most Americans about sex on television (and sex in the culture at large) is that it makes it impossible for parents to control what the self-proclaimed Ludite Neil Postman, the author of *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (1992), has called "the content and taboos of adult life." Parents, in other words, no longer have the opportunity to teach their children about the birds and the bees gradually, in a manner they consider appropriate; everything is exposed—so to speak—to kids all at once. The old system of moral socialization breaks down.



irony—and, given what they consider America's proclivity for gunboat diplomacy, as appropriate—that the United States is relatively easygoing about violence while being fairly uptight about sex. Consider *NYPD Blue*, the critically acclaimed show that has distressed citizens and legislators in both Canada and the United States—but for different reasons. Ronald I. Cohen, the national chair of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council, explains, "In the United States the problem is over sexual content. In Canada the only issue was with violence, not with the number of bare posteriors." In fact, one of the challenges facing those standardizing V-chip ratings is this discrepancy

The New Religion

WHOEVER tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time has effectively assumed the cultural role of parent and school," Gerbner says, "... teaching us most of what we know in common about life and society." In fact, by the time children reach school age, they will have spent more hours in front of the television than they will ever spend in college classrooms. Television, in short, has become a cultural force equaled in history only by organized religion. Only religion

has had this power to transmit the same messages about reality to every social group, creating a common culture.

Most people do not have to wait for, plan for, go out to, or seek out television, for the TV is on more than seven hours a day in the average American home. It comes to you directly. It has become a member of the family, telling its stories patiently, compellingly, untiringly. We *choose* to read *The New York Times*, or Dickens, or an entomology text. We *choose* to listen to Bach or Bartók, or at least to a classical station or a rock station or a jazz station. But we just watch TV—turn it on, see what's on. And in Gerbner's view it is an upper-middle-class conceit to say "Just turn off the television"—in most homes there is nothing as compelling as television at any time of the day or night.

It is significant that this viewing is nonselective. It's why Gerbner believes that the Cultural Indicators project methodology—looking at television's overall patterns rather than at the effects of specific shows—is the best approach. It is long-range exposure to television, rather than a specific violent act on a specific episode of a specific show, that cultivates fixed conceptions about life in viewers.

Nor is the so-called hard news, even when held distinct from infotainment shows like *Hard Copy* and *A Current Affair*, exempt from the disproportionate violence and misrepresentations on television in general. The old news saw "If it bleeds, it leads" usually prevails. Watch your local newscast tonight: it is not unlikely that the majority of news stories will be about crime or disaster—and it may well be that all six stories will be from outside your state, especially if you live far from any major metropolis. Fires and shootings are much cheaper and easier to cover than politics or community events. Violent news also generates higher ratings, and since the standards for television news are set by market researchers, what we get is lots of conformity, lots of violence. As the actor and director Edward James Olmos has pointedly observed, "For every half hour of TV news, you have twenty-three minutes of programming and seven minutes of commercials. And in that twenty-three minutes, if it weren't for the weather and the sports, you would not have any positive news. As for putting in even six minutes of hope, of pride, of dignity—it doesn't sell." The author and radio personality Garrison Keillor puts it even more pointedly: "It's as bloody as Shakespeare but without the intelligence and the poetry. If you watch television news you know less about the world than if you drank gin out of a bottle."

The strength of television's influence on our understanding of the world should not be underestimated. "Television's Impact on Ethnic and Racial Images," a study sponsored by the American Jewish Committee's Institute for American Pluralism and other groups, found that ethnic and racial images on television powerfully shape the way adolescents perceive ethnicity and race in the real world. "In dealing with socially relevant topics like racial and ethnic relations," the

study said, "TV not only entertains, it conveys values and messages that people may absorb unwittingly—particularly young people." Among viewers watching more than four hours each day, 25 percent said that television showed "what life is really like" and 40 percent said they learned a lot from television. African-Americans especially, the study showed, rely on television to learn about the world.

Television, in short, tells all the stories. Gerbner is fond of quoting the Scottish patriot Andrew Fletcher, who wrote to the Marquise of Montrose in 1704, "If I were permitted to write all the ballads I need not care who makes the laws of the nation." Fletcher identified the governing power of, in Gerbner's words, a "centralized system of ballads—the songs, legends, and stories that convey both information and what we call entertainment." Television has become this centralized system; it is the cultural arm of the state that established religion once was. "Television satisfies many previously felt religious needs for participating in a common ritual and for sharing beliefs about the meaning of life and the modes of right conduct," Gerbner has written. "It is, therefore, not an exaggeration to suggest that the licensing of television represents the modern functional equivalent of government establishment of religion." A scary collapsing, in other words, of church into state.

Is I Dream of Jeannie Violent?

PORTENTOUS talk like this gets the network executives rolling their eyes. Isn't this all a bit dire? Many in the broadcasting industry find Gerbner's work incomprehensible or ridiculous. His research has come in for scathing criticism over the years. Though usually soft-spoken and reasonable, Gerbner can be unyielding and strident; he is known, even among his closest disciples, for sometimes believing that people who disagree with him are motivated by personal animosity or vested interest. A letter from two screenwriters to *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, the alumni magazine of the University of Pennsylvania, in March of 1982 read, "We and many of our colleagues find ourselves wishing, perhaps in vain, that Gerbner will eventually recognize that many people of good will may disagree with him, not because they're misinformed but because they simply think he's wrong."

Gerbner's methodology draws fire mostly for its supposed insufficient emphasis on context. For years he has been ridiculed for a single example he cited as part of a routine Cultural Indicators project profile: network executives have never ceased to bring up the *I Dream of Jeannie* episode from 1968 that Gerbner deemed excessively violent. ("It had a really violent dream sequence," Gerbner says.) Frustrated by incidents like this one (more recently the project classified the *Laugh-In* twenty-fifth-anniversary special as very

violent owing to pratfalls and slapstick), Gerbner will no longer willingly discuss the content of individual shows, insisting that it is the overall pattern that matters most.

In 1983 ABC published a critique, "A Research Perspective on Television and Violence," that took particular issue with Gerbner's findings. Gerbner's inclusion of accidents, slapstick comedy, acts of nature, and cartoons within his definition of violence, the study said, "results in tallies that distort the amount of realistic violence." Though ABC's critique was dismissed by academic researchers as self-serving, an ABC vice-president, Christine Hikawa, reflected the sentiment prevailing among broadcasters at the National Council for Families & Television Conference in 1993 when she said, "When researchers equate *Tom and Jerry* with *I Spit on Your Grave*, their credibility goes right out the window."

Most people, I think, would agree with Hikawa. A cartoon is surely more appropriate for and less damaging to young viewers than a verisimilitudinous movie like *Silence of the Lambs*. Road Runner's depredations against Wile E. Coyote lack the visceral effect of the gorier violence committed by, say, the serial killer in the 1995 movie *Seven*, in which the rabidity is clearly meant to be disturbing.

But a cartoon's lack of brute visceral impact, Gerbner says, is precisely what makes it so insidious. "Violence in our studies is overt, physical demonstration of power that hurts or kills. Whether it is done in a so-called serious way or a so-called humorous way has no functional significance." He continues, "Humor is a sugar coating that makes the pill of violence go down much more easily—so it gets integrated into one's framework of knowledge." "Pratfalls are dangerous," Gerbner told me when I asked how his studies could implicate my beloved Three Stooges. "To make pain seem painless is sugarcoating power, sugarcoating the message of power. People don't understand that humor can be very violent and very cruel."

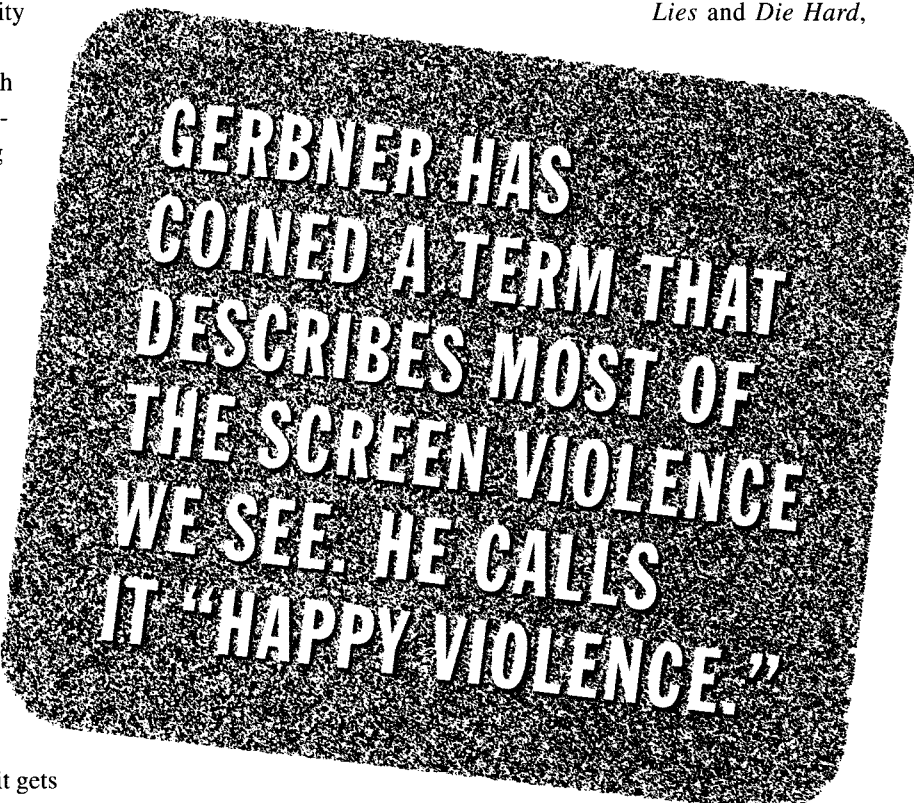
"Swift, Painless, Effective"

WHEN George Plimpton recently asked why, if television violence causes violence in the streets, television comedy doesn't cause comedy in the streets, he was with trademark wit making a commonsense observation: we don't directly replicate in our lives most of what we see on TV. But Gerbner doesn't say that we do. The reason that even apparently innocuous comedy can be so danger-

ous, he says, is that it reinforces viewers' perceptions of how the world works. No, comedy doesn't cause comedy in the streets. But TV violence indirectly contributes to our understanding that there is violence in the streets, typically wrought by a stronger entity against a weaker one. "Humorous stories are easier to digest," Gerbner says, "easier to absorb. But basically they are all messages of power. Messages of who can get away with what against whom."

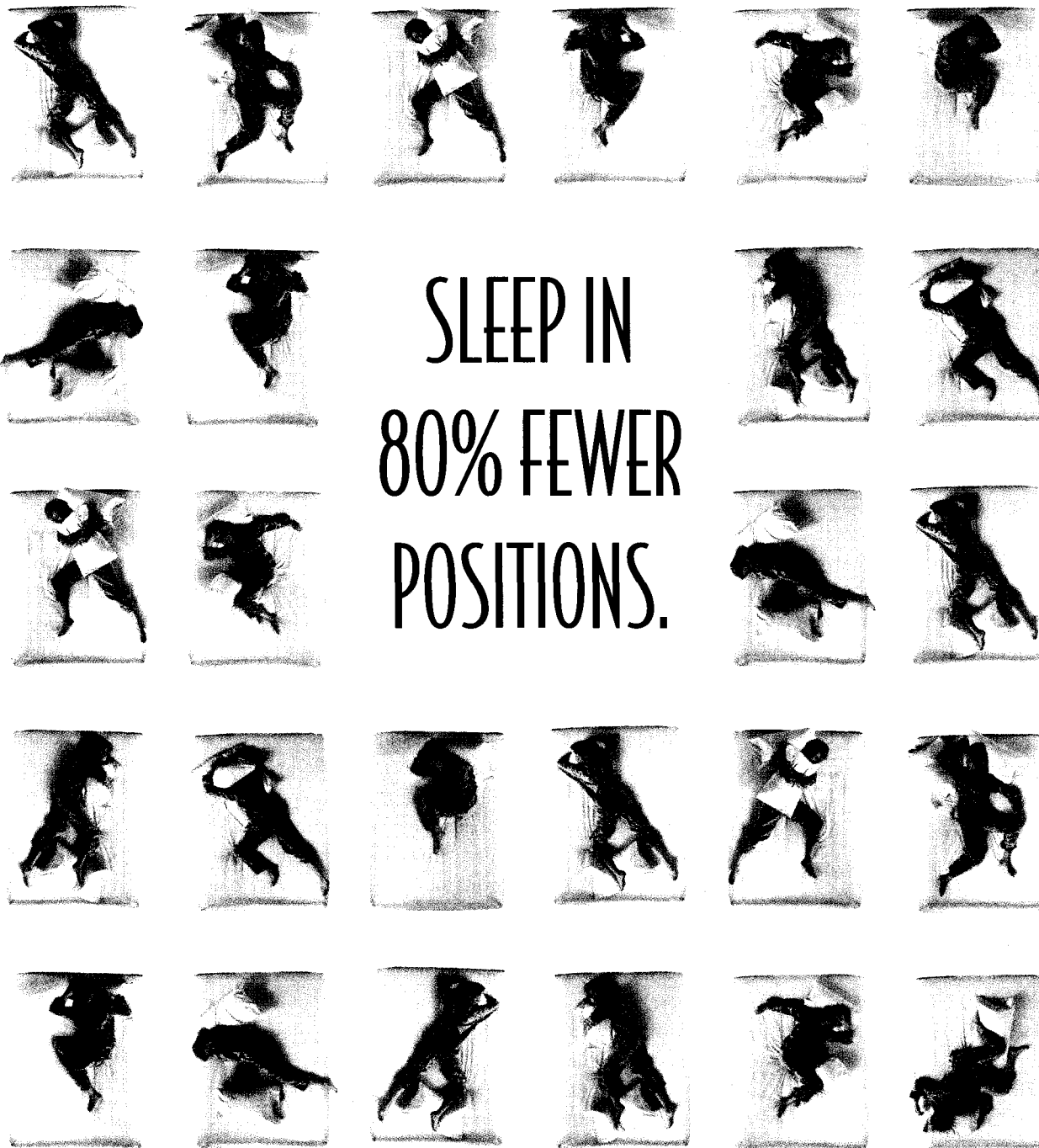
Gerbner has coined a term that describes most of the screen violence we see. "We are dealing with the formula-driven mass production of violence for entertainment—what I call 'happy violence.' It is swift, painless, effective . . . and always leads to a happy ending." Happy violence appears both in cartoons and in action movies like *True*

Lies and *Die Hard*,



GERBNER HAS
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wherein all problems can be solved by violence and violence has no serious consequences. Movies, it should be noted, are an important part of the constant violent fare on television and in the culture in general. They must become more and more graphic if they are to penetrate our violence-hardened sensibilities. Gerbner points out that body counts always rise in action sequels: the first *Die Hard* movie had eighteen deaths, and the second had 264; the first *Robocop* movie had thirty-two deaths, and the second had eighty-one; and the three *Godfather* movies piled up twelve, eighteen, and fifty-three corpses respectively. "Escalating the body count," he has written, "seems to be one way to get attention from a public punch-drunk on global mayhem." What, Gerbner asks, does this cultivate in our kids, in society? "We live in a world that is erected by the

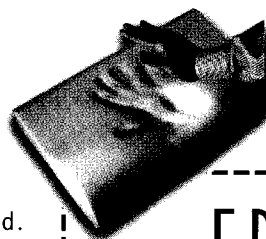


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stories we tell . . . and most of the stories are from television. These stories say this is how life works. These are the people who win; these are the people who lose; these are the kinds of people who are villains. It's a highly stereotypic world day after day. It doesn't matter whether it's serious or humorous. The main difference is that cartoons can go further. There is no more serious business for a culture or a society than the stories you tell your children."

Of course, stories have always been used to teach and control. The use of violent stories as moral tales is older than Hansel and Gretel. What is new is that the stories are standardized and commercialized. "For the first time in human history," Gerbner says, "the stories are told not by parents, not by the school, not by the church, not by the community or tribe and in some cases not even by the native country but by a relatively small and shrinking group of global conglomerates with something to sell. This changes in a very fundamental way the cultural environment into which our children are born, grow up, and become socialized." It used to be that scary stories were told to children face-to-face, so they could be modulated, softened, individually tailored by the parents or the community depending on the situation and the desired lesson. Children today, in contrast, grow up in a cultural environment that is designed to the specifications of a marketing strategy.

Media Monopolies and Censorship

TELEVISION violence, Gerbner has written, "is but the tip of the iceberg of a massive distortion in the way in which we make cultural policy in this country. [Cultural decision-making] is drifting dangerously out of democratic reach." In his view, television violence is just one symptom of a serious underlying problem that threatens to stifle democracy: the very structure of the culture industry.

Most of the debate about acceptable television programming is cast, especially by those in the industry, in terms of censorship versus free speech. But Gerbner says this is misleading: although censorship is unquestionably a problem (there's altogether too much of it), it is not the usual culprit, government, that is doing the censoring. It is private corporations. Gerbner writes,

The Founding Fathers did not foresee the rise of large conglomerates acting as private governments. Nor did they envision their cultural arms, the mass media . . . forming a virtual private Ministry of Culture and Established Church rolled into one, influencing the socialization of all Americans. In licensing broadcasters and then letting the marketplace take its course, Congress has made law respecting the establishment of the modern equivalent of religion and has given a few giant conglomerates the right to abridge freedom of speech.

The market, Gerbner says, is a plutocracy, not a democracy. And the largest market interests use the First Amendment as a shield while denying it to the disenfranchised. Censorship! Censorship! broadcasters cry when anyone suggests that their programming has deleterious social effects, that they might try distributing something different. Yet these interests exercise de facto censorship themselves: in co-opting all programming (as recently as 1986 ABC, CBS, and NBC controlled 70 percent of the television market) a media monopoly has consolidated the diversity of human experience into a few basic formulas. A concentrated marketplace puts distinct limits on the range of views represented. The people have no say in what gets broadcast. This, in Gerbner's view, is plainly undemocratic. But we have become so accustomed to the dominance of a market-driven, advertiser-sponsored media system that we don't realize it doesn't have to be this way.

Alternatives to the American system of broadcasting do exist. Britain, for example, requires all television owners to pay a yearly license fee, which goes into a fund to subsidize independent productions on the BBC. In France proceeds from a tax on entertainment fund private and public producers, ensuring that a range of perspectives gets represented. Whereas in the United States the federal commitment to public broadcasting is less than \$1.50 per capita, other countries typically pay about \$25 to \$30 per capita. Aside from the establishment of the currently besieged Corporation for Public Broadcasting (which runs PBS), in the 1960s, the only serious attempts to legislate federal protection of the public interest in broadcasting were made in the 1930s. Herbert Hoover, who presided over the original Communications Act, for example, called for a two percent tax on radio-set sales to "pay for daily programs of the best skill and talent."

In most truly democratic countries television is subject to the electorate; the public interest is upheld. In the United States, however, the few laws requiring broadcasters to serve the public interest have never been enforced. This is in large part because federal policy for U.S. broadcasting, set in the 1930s, heavily stacked the deck in favor of a market-driven system. During the Depression policymakers hoped that a commercial broadcasting model would ensure sufficient programming diversity. But when the commercial model was codified in the Communications Act of 1934, its only—albeit important—concession to a broader civic responsibility was the stipulation that holders of broadcast licenses agree to serve the "public interest, convenience, and necessity."

The vaunted 1996 Telecommunications Act is the first significant update of the 1934 Communications Act. It has many elements, but one of its basic goals is to restore "competition" in the broadcasting market through further deregulation. Robert W. McChesney, a professor at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, spoke in blunt Gerbnerian terms at the founding convention of Gerbner's Cultural Environment

Movement, held in March of last year in St. Louis. "The 1996 Telecom Bill is truly one of the most corrupt pieces of legislation in American history," he said. "It has basically covertly handed over all communications to a few conglomerates. And it's all based on a big lie that Goebbels would have been impressed by: that the bill is meant to focus competition." By deregulating the industry, the Telecommunications Act has ensured that it will be consolidated still further. A rash of mergers has already taken place.

McChesney and Gerbner believe that it is structurally impossible for advertising-based television programming to represent the range and diversity of positions in our society. The problems, McChesney wrote in *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of*

U.S. Broadcasting, 1928–1935 (1993), are that "US political culture does not permit any discussion of the fundamental weaknesses in capitalism" and "corporate media have encouraged the belief that even the consideration of alternatives was tantamount to a call for totalitarianism."

According to Gerbner, a 1974 House committee report on television, suppressed by the broadcasting lobby before it could reach the House floor, suggested that the very organization of the network industry led to violent programming. Gerbner has long believed this to be true. Look at lists of the ten top-rated shows each year, he urges. Most of them are not violent; they're more likely to be comedies or nonviolent dramas. Yet producers still make scores of bloody shows. If network executives are merely obeying free-market forces, how can it be that they're making lots of shows that aren't in the highest demand?

Because, Gerbner told me, "there is no free market in television." It is well known in the industry that few television programs will break even in the domestic market. According to Todd Gitlin's book *Inside Prime Time* (1983), it costs more to produce one minute of your own programming than to buy an hour's worth from the world market. A programmer in Copenhagen, for example, can lease an old episode of *Dallas* for under \$5,000, less than the cost of producing one minute of original Danish drama. The high cost of production means that producers must sell their shows into syndication or abroad—from which more than half the receipts come—if they wish to make a profit. Selling shows abroad requires a proven story formula that, in distributor lingo, "travels well." The most common formulas are obvious: sex and violence.

MY DAUGHTER AT CHESS

Playing her, I wonder: can a
harmless two-year-old named Hannah
spring a trap to ambush my advantage?
She recognizes all the pieces
quite as if by anamnesis
but moves them like a Tartar on the rampage.

She'll cram two pieces on one square
for company; to my despair
with her sharp elbow she'll unhorse my knight;
and if I patiently explain
it can't be done, she'll end the reign
of my poor royal couple with one bite!

Here's her chubby rook who'll dish up
splinter-fare; her skinny bishop
sneaks out darkly on a secret mission;
there's her knight astride his bronco
trampling hard upon a pawn col-
laborating with the opposition.

She knocks my queen upon her face,
pries the felt from my king's base,
and does not need ability or luck;
for she by child-right will win
while I must lose through discipline
that cannot match her innocence and pluck.

—DAVID SOLWAY

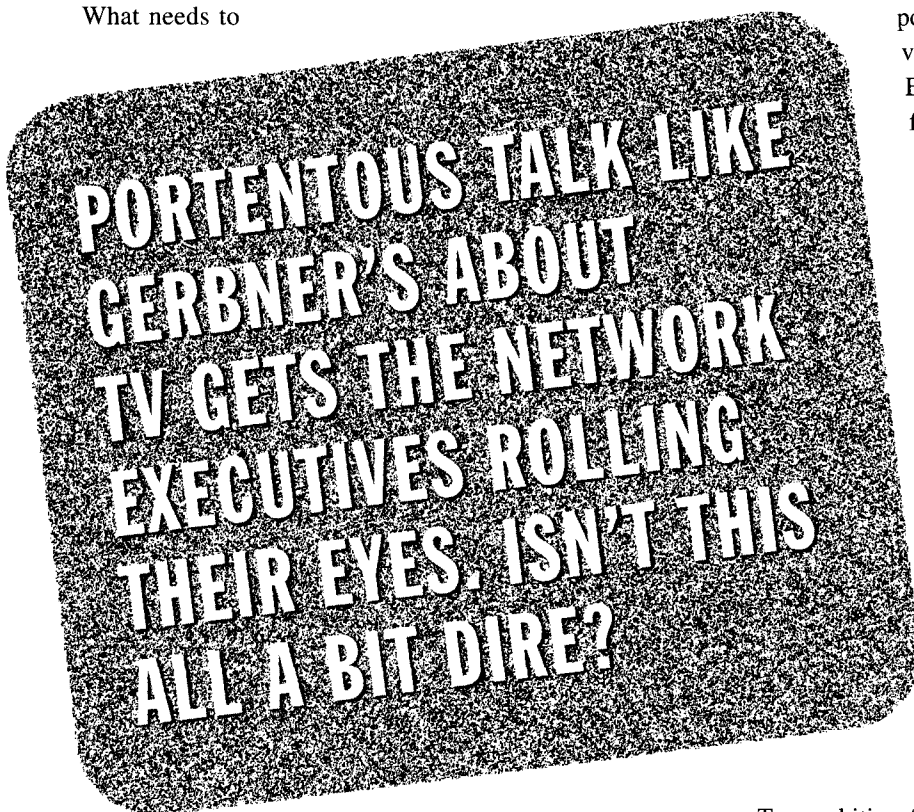
The Simple, the Naked, and the Bloody

SEX travels well. A Parisian or a Warsawian can delectate in Pamela Anderson in her bikini on *Baywatch* as well as a New Yorker can—hence *Baywatch* is the most-watched show in the world. Violence travels well. When Sylvester Stallone rains bullets on the bad guys, who duck or spew blood, a viewer in Beijing can understand what is going on as well as a viewer in Peoria. Grunting is easy to translate. That's why *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* is watched by 300 million children in eighty countries. Violence and sex are naturally televisual genres: they're image-driven. Humor, subtlety, complex dialogue, and culture-specific idiosyncrasies don't translate so well. Thus there's an overwhelming global marketing imperative in favor of the simple, the naked, and the bloody. Cheap to produce, easy to distribute—violence is the surest road to profit. It becomes part of a global formula that is, in Gerbner's words, "imposed on creative people and foisted on the children of the world."

Polls show that the creative people in Hollywood don't like this. Formulas constrain them. Television-station man-

agers don't like it either: 74 percent say they do not like the violent shows they program. But bound by the bottom line, the cost per thousand viewers (CPM), they are obliged to buy them. Advertisers have no vested interest in pitching goods during violent shows; in fact, they worry about tainting their products with unsavory associations. But advertisers, too, bow before the almighty CPM. Market forces (high demand) make top-rated shows too expensive for many advertisers. According to Gerbner, some of the highest-rated programs have gone out of existence because they became too costly for advertisers. Finally, viewers—what they say in polls notwithstanding—do watch violent shows. Yes, there are so many of these shows that it's hard to avoid them. And yes, viewers have been conditioned to accept the corporate violence doled out to them. Still, viewers, too, are implicated in the culture and media structure, along with executives, producers, station managers, writers, and advertisers. If television violence is a problem, and most agree that it is, then it is a systemic problem.

What needs to



be addressed, then, is the whole structure. Each of its constituencies, Gerbner believes, if given a chance to escape the repressive market-dictated strictures that bind it, would do so. What is needed is an alternative model. But in a political environment where, as the journalism professor Robert McChesney points out, alternatives to a market system cannot be entertained without ridicule, this is a challenging need to meet. How do we escape from the trap? That is largely what the Cultural Environment Movement was conceived to do.

The Cultural-Protection Movement

AFTER he retired from the deanship at Annenberg, George Gerbner became, as he puts it, "a part-time researcher, full-time agitator" and continued to lecture all over the world on television violence. At the end of his speeches people would ask, What can we do? He would answer, Write your politician or broadcaster. Teach your children about television formulas. But this, Gerbner came to realize, was "feeble and humiliating—why should we have to ask for something that ought to be a right?" In other countries people had a right and a voice equal to those of conglomerates and broadcasters. Why couldn't people in the United States? So in late December of 1990 Gerbner and some like-minded friends got together in a borrowed conference room in Washington, D.C., to launch the Cultural Environment Movement (CEM). A quarter century earlier Rachel Carson's

Silent Spring awakened readers to the perils of pollution and stimulated a generation of environmentalists to action. Gerbner's Cultural Environment Movement would do the same for media culture.

The movement yielded its first significant fruit a year ago, when it held its founding convention. Hundreds of delegates (left-leaning academics, progressive activists, former TV-industry people, and cultural policymakers from all over the world) assembled in a Holiday Inn on a bland commercial strip along Highway 366 in St. Louis. Their mission, as articulated in a draft of CEM's Viewer's Declaration of Independence, was to "dissolve the cultural bands which have tied human development to marketing strategies, and to assume an active role in making policy decisions about the cultural environment into which . . . children are born." A serious mandate, and an ambitious one.

Too ambitious? The convention, a three-day affair jam-packed with working groups, cultural events, and plenary sessions, throbbed with activity and optimism. It had much of the tone of a civil-rights rally, swollen with the revolutionary fervor and progressive rhetoric of the sixties. Sumi Sevilla Haru, a four-foot-ten-inch, ninety-pound Filipino labor leader full of compressed energy, spoke in the language of the labor union when she told the convention, "We have to do something about the media massacre. We don't want to agonize—we need to *organize*." When *The Washington Post* columnist Dorothy Gilliam entreated delegates in an after-



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AM 4/20/7

dinner speech to “think of your work as civil-rights work—CEM can be part of the civil-rights movement” (for which she got a standing ovation), she was making explicit the broader mission by which most of the delegates defined themselves. The general effect of the idealistic enthusiasm was inspiring. But there was in all this an element of Pollyannaism, of preaching to the converted. No one was there to disagree. As one sober-minded delegate, a former television writer and producer and now a retired professor of media studies, confided to me, “These people are zealots. They’re naive. Notice that there are no network people here. Things would be different if there were.”

have pre-empted the cultural issue,” Gerbner says. “They’re appealing to legitimate concerns of American families and organizations who resent dependence on media.” This is precisely why CEM is so important: “The culture wars are heating up, and we need a liberating alternative to stop fundamentalists from expropriating the issue and taking it in a repressive direction.”

CEM intends to fight for alternatives both to censorship and to the old-fashioned pieties of the cultural conservatives. But, I asked Gerbner, aren’t we just talking about competing visions of cultural reality, of morality—one on the left, one on the right? Each side wants to impose its vi-



The last night of the convention I asked Gerbner how he thought this sometimes radical progressivism would play in the mainstream cultural arena, which is in general fairly moderate, even conservative. He replied that CEM should perhaps be seen not as radical or leftist, or even as liberal, but as “liberating.” Americans have been responding to the rhetoric of family-values conservatives who, Gerbner says, really are on to something. The specific example Dan Quayle chose to use—Murphy Brown’s getting pregnant out of wedlock—may have been unfortunate, but in Gerbner’s opinion he made a good general point. “Fundamentalists

sion on the country, and therefore naturally favors whatever cultural products advance it. Gerbner replied, “We are not just providing a single alternative cosmology to, say, the religious right. We’re advocating diversity.” But “diversity” is weak tea, protest some of those who deplore today’s violent television. Censorship is dangerous, Gerbner would be likely to reply. Conditioned by his dislike of fascism to distrust any kind of concentrated power (governmental, corporate, or otherwise), Gerbner cannot abide censorship, which can be both a means to and an end of such concentrations. Thus he can be very explicit about the

sorts of programming we should and should not have—up to a point. We *should* have shows that depict minorities and women more favorably; we *should* have fewer mindlessly violent shows; but we *should not* use censorship to attain the programming we want.

The Cultural Environment Movement's basic mission, in other words, is to see that more stories by more different kinds of people are broadcast. Stories by people with something to tell, as Gerbner likes to say, rather than stories by people with something to sell. Think of a cafeteria, he says. When you enter a cafeteria, you feel that you have a right to choose what you will consume. But although some would argue that the choices in the cultural cafeteria are better now than they were for a parochial customer of the past, the choices remain limited: you have to choose from what's there. As a citizen, Gerbner believes, you have a responsibility to ask, What are the possibilities? How do we make this into a much richer and more nourishing and more diverse cafeteria? People don't realize that they have a say in what gets served here. CEM's mission is to make them aware of this fact, so that cultural choices get pushed into the political realm, where they belong.

"The Commons Is Needed"

OF course, one problem with this mission is that when culture is subsumed under a political rubric, debates about artistic values become debates about political values. The notion of aesthetic taste gets pushed aside. Taste, to be sure, can be a dangerous concept, a smokescreen to obscure political designs; Keyan Tomaselli, a combative South African media theorist who spoke at the CEM convention, points out that "good taste" can be its own form of censorship. For years in South Africa it was considered in "poor taste" to bring up certain aspects of race relations in middle-class white society; standards of "decency" ensured that art depicting these issues would be rare and marginalized. Clearly, "decency" and "poor taste" were bourgeois prettifications conjured to dress up (and thereby protect) outright racist attitudes. Nevertheless, art in the Western tradition is generally founded in some sense on taste, maybe even on elitist taste. When CEM tries to make political values interchangeable with cultural ones, it risks junking the critical standards we do have, many of which can be and are used as arguments against the quality of Hollywood's standard violent schlock.

And then there are those, conservatives in particular, who will argue that what Gerbner is advocating when he speaks of diversity is really "identity politics," or quotas applied to culture. The implications of total diversity, these people will say, will be total fragmentation. True, in the ideal CEM imagining, shows would represent minorities more accurately and in truer proportions relative to the overall population.

But taken to its logical extremes, that might mean accepting Pat Buchanan's *No Way José* show (exploring the lives and views of xenophobic white male economic protectionists) and the *Ralph Reed Family Values Show* (with nary a homosexual or nonbeliever in sight), not to mention Madonna's *S&M Hour* (for those who find their taste in sexuality inadequately represented by current programming). The pursuit of diversity, if overzealous, leads to proliferating factions and subgroups. The result is tribalization, as each group retreats to its own set of stories.

A nation, almost by definition, must have some stories its citizens hold in common. From the 1950s to the 1970s the three television networks provided considerable common cultural ground for the United States. Everybody watched the same programs and televised events and was in some sense linked by this shared experience. But in the 1970s, with the spread of niche marketing and cable television, channels proliferated. The audience fragmented. America lost its common hearth.

"To recognize diversity," Todd Gitlin wrote in *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture Wars* (1996), "more than diversity is needed. The commons is needed." The danger inherent in CEM's using cultural diversity as a political tactic is that the idea of the commons gets lost. Of course, without this tactic we're in danger of being stuck with a limited set of master narratives favored either by conservative absolutists or by corporate conglomerates whose first concern is profit, not public interest, and for whom the universalist principle means appealing not to a common humanity but to the lowest common denominator. The trick for CEM will be to navigate between the Scylla of standardized, noninclusive, corporate-conglomerate-produced, market-strategy-conforming formulas that at least provide much of the nation with common cultural capital and the Charybdis of more-inclusive, more-diverse, less-formulaic, community-produced stories and programming that isolate each subgroup behind its respective cultural bulkhead. Gerbner believes that the Cultural Environment Movement can develop a mosaic that will to some extent incorporate ideological differences while representing the cultural claims of a larger cross-section of society than existing mainstream culture represents. In fact, he says, CEM can be the forum for all those who want to regain some say in what culture gets produced, in what they and their children consume.

At the convention's invocation, a slightly weird, touchy-feely affair with Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Navajo prayers and progressive exhortations, Gerbner said his standard piece about returning cultural decision-making from the invisible Ministry of Culture to the people. To me, the most interesting words he spoke were these: "Our task now is to assemble a coalition like the anti-fascist coalition of the 1940s, with the partisan brigades."

Fighting Fascism

FASCISM is the specter that looms, tenebrous, over all of Gerbner's life and work. There are at least two ways to interpret the shadow it casts. The first is to grant his warnings about creeping fascism all the more authority for his having lived under fascism, and for his having risked his life to fight it during the Second World War. The second is to discount everything he says on the subject because his significant early experiences under fascism have unduly colored his world view: since the war he has seen everything in terms of it.

My initial instinct was to incline toward the second interpretation. In my early conversations with Gerbner, I sometimes had to stifle the urge to say, Lighten up. My own cultural experience—watching violent cartoons when I was little, and violent action movies when older—has yet to produce any obvious violent or fascist impulses. And I am by no means alone in believing that, disproportionate quantities notwithstanding, violence in culture generally reflects the violence that is already present in real life. Family-court prosecutors scoff at the notion that television causes violent children; bad living conditions or bad genes do. Art since ancient times has depicted violence, and even tried to use it as catharsis. (Though Greek plays, Gerbner points out, never showed violence onstage; it was almost always reported by a messenger.) Moreover, although the studies that find the most-dramatic correlations between television and violence get the most publicity, there are other respectable studies whose conclusions are more restrained. "Television in the Lives of Our Children," for instance, one of the first major undertakings in the field, was published in 1961 after people became concerned about violent new shows like *The Rifleman* and *The Untouchables*. Researchers examined ten North American communities from 1958 to 1960, scrutinizing in great detail many aspects of television's effects. Their conclusion was a model of common sense.

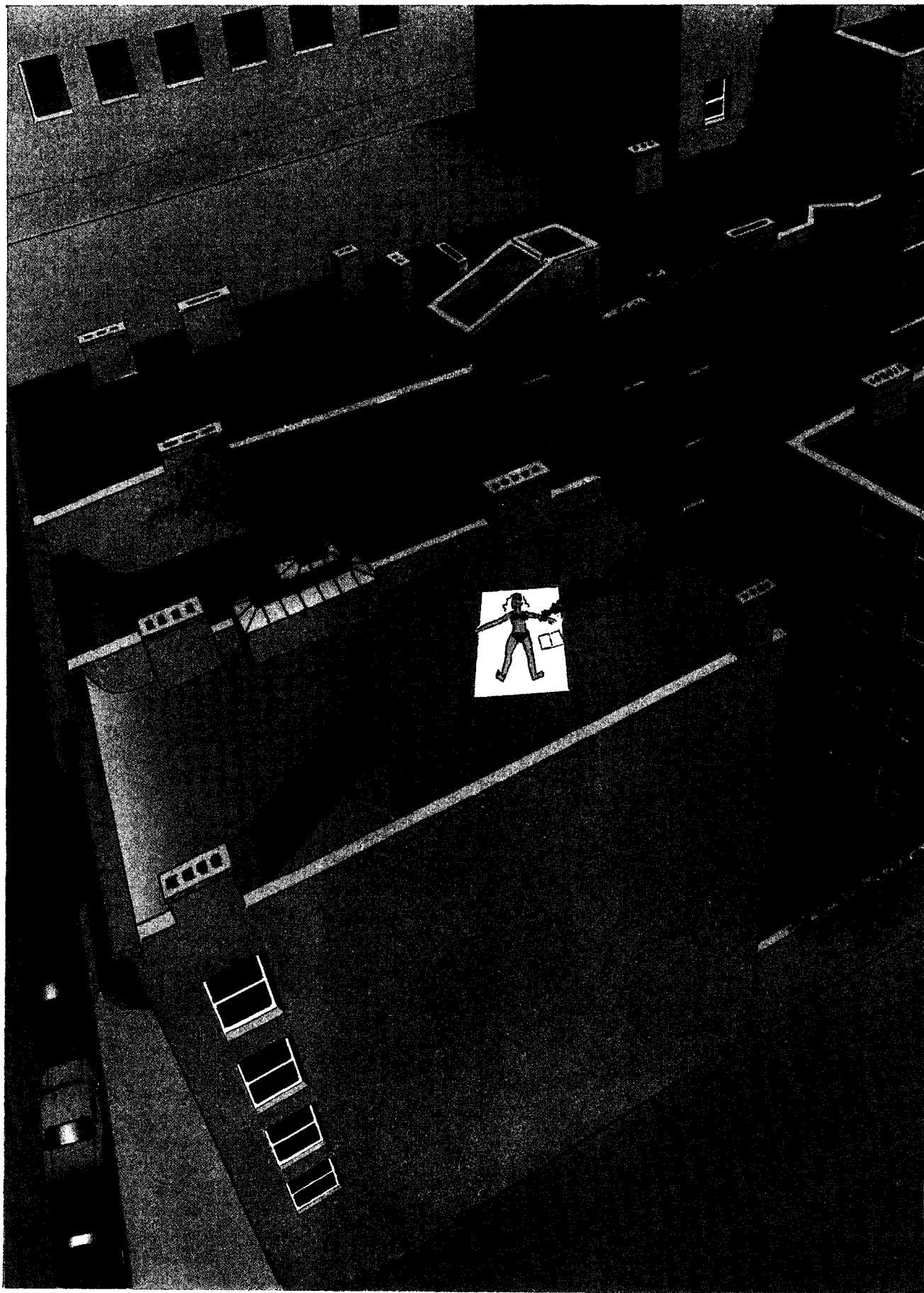
For *some* children, under *some* conditions, *some* television is harmful. For *other* children, under the same conditions, or for the same children under *other* conditions, it may be beneficial. For *most* children, under *most* conditions, most television is probably neither harmful nor particularly beneficial.

Beyond this, CEM's criticisms of "the market" will not be popular. If the flip side of freedom, innovation, comparative material prosperity, and global leadership is some crass commercialism, philistinism, and formulaic television shows, wouldn't most people say, So be it? It is easy to imagine the bafflement of free-market conservatives—and of the viewing public in general—at the phenomenon of CEM: What's wrong with television? What's fascist about *I Dream of Jeanie*? What's bothering the leftist malcontents this time?

But CEM has at least as many relatives on the right as on the left. In fact, one of CEM's closest older cousins grew out of the Moral Majority. In the 1980s Jerry Falwell's Coalition for Better Television complained, as CEM does today, that the industry's commerce-at-all-costs ethos adversely affected programming. In advocating television that strictly reflected the cultural values of the Moral Majority, CFBT was more a predecessor of Dan Quayle than of CEM. But today people of all political persuasions are insecure. They worry about their safety and their future, and about the safety and the future of their children. This insecurity is aggravated, if not actually caused, by the cultural environment. Conservatives have recognized the insecurity and speak to it. Gerbner's view is that conservatives exploit it, and use it to push the country in a repressive direction. If this is true, then it may be that CEM does have a role to play as a guardian against fascism. Only it is less television per se that CEM is guarding against than the tendency of fundamentalists to favor absolutist measures in both the political and the cultural realm.

The Hollywood version of Gerbner's life would probably be a great movie. It tells a heroic story. And I don't think it would do most people any harm to watch it. But I do understand why Gerbner might say that the movie would contribute in a subtle way to neofascist impulses. In its simplicity, its glorification of violence as a means of resolving conflict, and its glossing lightly over the suffering and tragedy of violence, the movie would add to an aggregate that fosters the Mean World Syndrome and greater acceptance of martial measures. Maybe Gerbner could afford to lighten up a little anyway. But I can see why he might find the independent film version of his life (its less straightforwardly heroic portrayal of him notwithstanding) superior to the Hollywood version in a way that is more than just aesthetic.

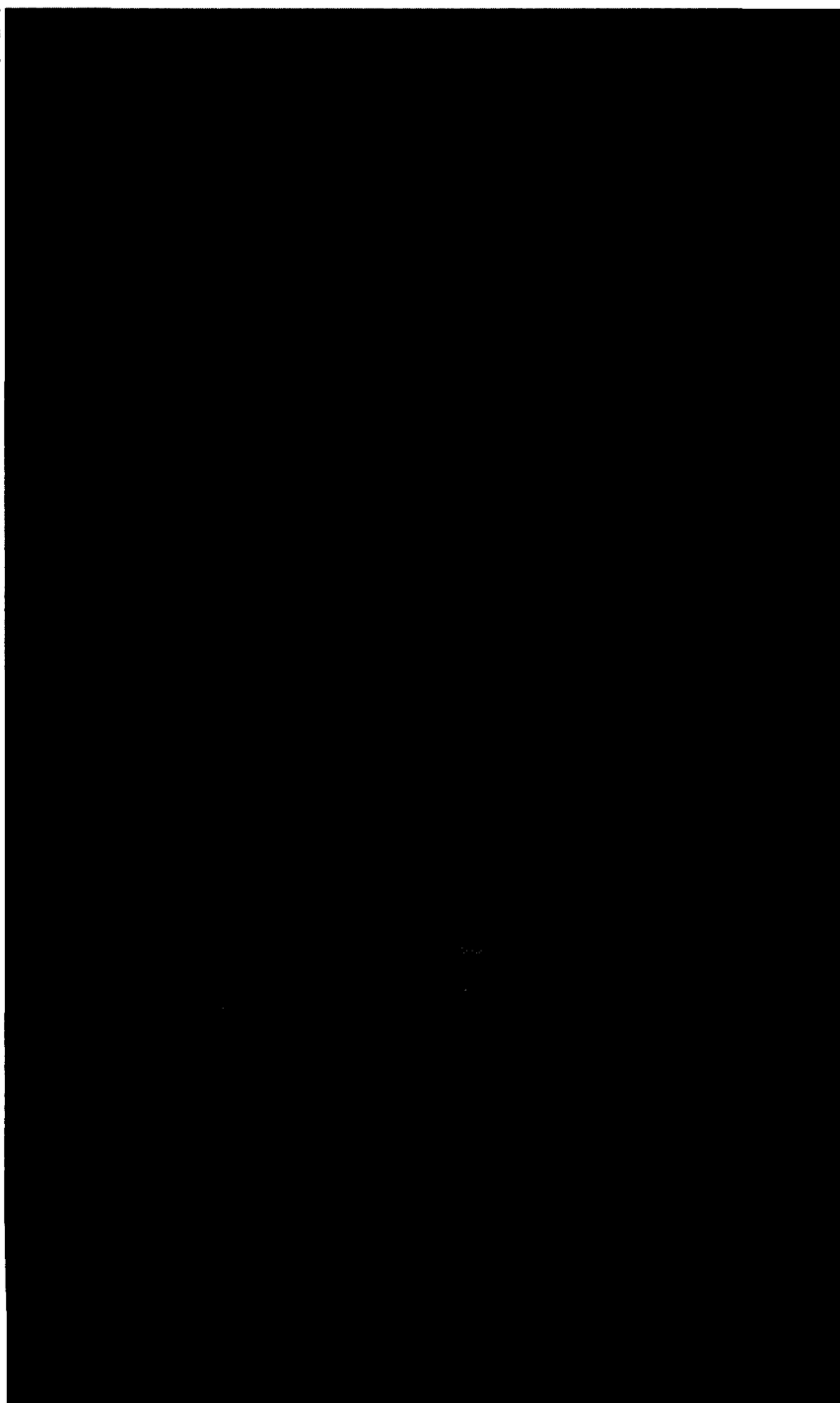
Television, in Gerbner's view, is by no means inherently bad. It does much that is good. For many people who would otherwise be just plain bored, television represents an enrichment of cultural horizons. It has gone a long way toward diminishing isolation and parochialism and has given us cultural capital to hold in common. No modern state can govern without television; it is the social cement that religion once was, holding disparate groups and subgroups together. But, Gerbner firmly believes, so potent is television's power to inform and control, so strong is its power to teach us who gets away with what against whom, that a democratic people that cedes control of television to a non-elected few will not remain a democratic people for long. The more one contemplates the pervasiveness of stereotypical patterns in television, the more one perceives the inaccurate picture of reality it cultivates in viewers—and the more one inclines toward a charitable understanding of Gerbner's fears about fascism. ☞



Underwater Daredevils

*Divers compete to see who can go
deepest on just one breath—and who can
survive the yet-more-perilous
ascent to air*

JIM EDDIS



ONE mile off the coast of Miami, Alejandro Ravelo, a small, unshaven man, perches quietly at the edge of a floating white platform, his neoprene-clad torso swaying without resistance to the ocean's uneven rhythms. His submerged feet sport three-foot-long fins. A heavy-duty clip clamps his nostrils closed.

Ravelo's breathing is slow and deep. His eyes are shut. By calming his mind he will, he hopes, slow his body and quell its thirst for oxygen as he attempts to reclaim his place as the world's deepest breath-holding diver, unaided by breathing equipment—a title that the Italian Umberto Pelizzari took in 1992. In his category of breath-hold, or "free," diving, called constant-weight, Pelizzari descended 236 feet on a single breath of air. Ravelo aims to descend ten feet farther, looking for a "confirmation tag" attached to a blood-red guide rope that has already been laid deep beneath the platform. If he grabs the tag, the time he took to reach it—probably about a minute—will not be the most impressive part of

his oxygenless excursion: he set a world record in 1993 by holding his breath for six minutes and forty-one seconds

while lying motionless at the bottom of a hotel pool. The true feat is the tremendous exertion required to return to the surface. With his arms extended above him in a hydrodynamic Superman pose, Ravelo must kick against gravity the equivalent of nineteen stories back to air.

Around Ravelo's platform the faces of six scuba divers—white ovals emerging from dark wet suits—bob on the Atlantic's steely swells, waiting for Ravelo's move. Stationed at ten-meter intervals, the divers, who will later be joined by breath-hold divers, are ready to serve as links in Ravelo's underwater lifeline. If he passes out, no one of the safety divers can rush him to the surface: they will be anchored to their assigned depths by the perils of the bends, which threaten divers who breathe compressed air and ascend too rapidly. Instead they

**Mehgan Heaney-
Grier on the
way to a record
155-foot
breath-hold dive**

will pass his unconscious body back to the surface like a baton.

Spectator boats drift away; their engines must not taint the air. Momentarily lapsing from his trance, Ravelo signals to his manager, Rudi Castineyra, among the scuba divers. Castineyra extends his arm into the air and gives a thumbs-down sign—diver-speak not for “bad” but for “descend.” Air hisses out of their buoyancy vests as the divers sink like paratroopers into the clouds. Ravelo’s black form remains alone under the gray sky as he prepares his underwater pas seul.

In 1992, in Cuba, Ravelo set the world record for constant-weight free diving at 230 feet—the record Pelizzari broke only a few months later in Italy, where free divers are celebrated as fervently as bullfighters are in Spain. When Ravelo tried to regain his title in 1993, Cuban security officials refused him a boat, fearing that he would sail for America. Their refusal drove him to flee to Miami.

Ravelo’s upper body grows larger and then smaller: his ribs are bowing outward from the pressure of his lungs as he breathes deeply, stretching their capacity for a gigantic last gasp. He makes the *puh-puh-puh* sounds of

a bicycle pump as he swallows air into his digestive system, like a child wanting to burp. This may save Ravelo’s life: on the way back up he will belch the gaseous discharge into his lungs. His twenty minutes of breathing techniques complete, a tingling in his fingertips tells him that his body is fully oxygenated. He blows off carbon dioxide with four hard exhales and gasps once. The water accepts him silently.

With a flutter of powerful fin kicks Ravelo propels himself downward. At fifty feet the increasing water pressure compresses the air-filled cavities in his body to a density sufficient for him to sink without effort. He stops kicking, and the force of gravity slices him through the water like an arrow surging toward its target.

RINO Gamba, of the Confédération Mondiale des Activités Subaquatiques (CMAS), has been verifying free-diving records, including Ravelo’s, since 1967. “They aren’t trying to beat nature,”

he says of the divers. “They have a deep love of the sea. You cannot understand the strength of their passion.”

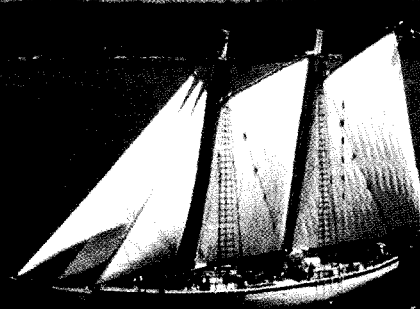
Gamba points out that human beings have long braved the sea unaided by gadgets. In 1913, thirty years before Jacques Yves Cousteau and Emil Gagnan perfected the self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA), a Greek sponge diver, Stotti Geroghios, dove 200 feet without so much as fins and tied a line to the lost anchor of an Italian battleship. Archaeological digs have unearthed widespread evidence of breath-hold diving in seaside cultures. Mother of pearl, for example, harvested from the deep, adorns carved ornaments that date from 3200 B.C. in Thebes and 4500 B.C. in Mesopotamia. Today in Japan female divers known as *amas* scavenge the ocean floor for pearls and coral at depths of as much as 145 feet for up to three hours a day, returning to the surface as many as ninety times for air. Scuba divers at those depths for this duration would suffer decompression sickness. The *ama* practice of whistling before a plunge seemed only a custom until scientists discovered that whistling increases air pressure in the lungs, forcing blood out and leaving more volume for the next breath.

Rural peoples of the Mediterranean and the Caribbean buy the daily catch of local spearfishers who hold their breath as they dive. Ravelo himself, before becoming the youngest-ever member of the Cuban national spearfishing team, helped his father support the family by spearfishing. With his spear gun attached by rope to a buoy on the surface, he searched beneath underwater rocks and in caves for groupers, which can be as large as 140 pounds. Once the fish was speared, a buddy at the surface gathered in the line while Ravelo, fresh air in his lungs, returned to untangle the line from rocks or sometimes to fight his catch hand to fin. Today spearfishing has become a sport for thousands around the world. At international championships judges tally points for each fish caught and for their weights; the record for a bluefin tuna caught with a spear gun stands at 398 pounds.

by Colin Beavan

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Free diving is not without risk. In the European countries of the Mediterranean alone about fifty-five free divers die each year, many from "shallow-water blackout." With increasing depth, pressure compresses the chest, giving divers the false sensation that their lungs are full. But during ascent pressure drops rapidly and gas in the lungs expands, which can lead to a lack of blood-oxygen and loss of consciousness, often just before divers reach the surface. Pre-dive hyperventilation, as practiced by Ravelo and others, can also put divers at risk by lowering carbon dioxide levels so much that they do not feel the need to breathe soon enough. Meghan Heaney-Grier, a nineteen-year-old model who established the U.S. women's constant-weight free-diving record at 155 feet, and who accompanied her friend Ravelo to observe his most recent attempt to break a record, explains the danger all free divers face: "You override your brain's message telling you when to breathe. You're running on your reserve tank and there's no warning before you hit empty."

Most free divers neither hunt for fish nor seek to set records. They simply prefer to venture underwater unencumbered by pounds of scuba equipment. "Breath-holders often see things scuba divers don't," says Tec Clark, the assistant director of the YMCA's national scuba program (a U.S. federation of CMAS), based in Norcross, Georgia, which supported Ravelo's attempt as part of its plans to promote free diving more widely. "The aquatic environment accepts you more as a free diver. You get to see fish that might otherwise shy away from bubbles and the noise of scuba mechanisms." Heaney-Grier agrees. She tells stories of riding the backs of twenty-five-foot whale sharks and giant sea turtles on a single breath of air.

THE quest to make the world's deepest dive unaided by breathing equipment began in earnest about thirty years ago, when Enzo Maiorca, an Italian, and Jacques Mayol, a Frenchman born in Shanghai, separately developed methods using heavy weights to speed their descent. As they plummeted five feet per second, they grabbed their noses and blew like crazy, racing against time to equalize the mounting pressure that could otherwise burst an eardrum.

One method, which survives to this day, involves no swimming at all and is known as "no-limits" free diving. Divers hold on to a weighted, rope-guided sled. Delivered by this aquatic luge to the prescribed depth, they detach themselves from the sled and pull a pin that releases compressed air from a cylinder into a balloon, which they grab to buoy themselves back to the surface in a storm of bubbles. In an intermediate kind of free diving, "variable-weight" divers hasten their descent with a sinker of no more than a third of their body weight, which they shed before ascending unaided. In Ravelo's "constant-weight" type of free diving, he completes the round trip without assistance.

In the late sixties Mayol and Maiorca achieved depths approaching 240 feet. Physiologists, groups of whom curiously follow free divers, cautioned them against going deeper. The limit, they said, would be not breath-holding capacity but water pressure, which below 325 feet, they calculated, would collapse the chest like an empty soda can—an effect known as thoracic squeeze.

But Mayol was convinced otherwise. During his studies of the diving behavior and anatomy of dolphins at the Seaquarium, near Key Biscayne, Florida, he witnessed autopsies that revealed no obvious anatomical structure preventing thoracic squeeze. The lungs and thorax were essentially the same in a dolphin as in a human being, yet dolphins survived great depths. Mayol was sure that whatever protected them would also protect people. Testing himself in waters from the Mediterranean to the frigid lakes of the Andes, and helped by a group of scientists, Mayol sought to understand what happens to the human body underwater. In a typical experiment, Mayol descended to 150 feet and held his breath for nearly four minutes with a cardiac catheter inserted in his chest. When in 1976 he defied warnings and, helped by a sled, went to 328 feet, scientists confirmed the existence of "blood shift" in humans.

We share this mechanism to prevent crushing—a throwback to our evolutionary aquatic heritage—with dolphins, seals, and other diving mammals. In response to pressure, the body constricts the blood vessels on the periphery, forcing blood from the extremities into the chest cavity. The thoracic cavity becomes not like an empty soda can but like a full one, blood being incompressible.

Blood shift protected Francisco "Pipin" Ferreras, another native of Cuba who now lives in Florida, when in 1990 he broke Mayol's record for no-limits free diving by going to 367 feet. In 1991 Umberto Pelizzari, Ravelo's nemesis in constant-weight free diving, broke the no-limits record by going to 387 feet.

These records tempt divers to believe that there is no limit to the depths a diver can withstand, but scientists still say



otherwise. They worry now not about the crushing of the chest but about cardiac arrhythmias, which they have observed during Ferreras's dives. Claes Lundgren, the director of the Center for Research and Education in Special Environments at the State University of New York at Buffalo medical school, has observed that blood shift causes the heart to swell. Lundgren is also concerned that mounting blood pressure will eventually burst the capillary walls inside the lungs. The potential looms for an unromantic death by cardiac arrest or by drowning in lungs full of blood. "No one seems concerned," he says. "But they will be when somebody finds out what the absolute limit is in a very unpleasant way."

***On a platform,
Alejandro Ravelo
hyperventilates
as he prepares
to dive***

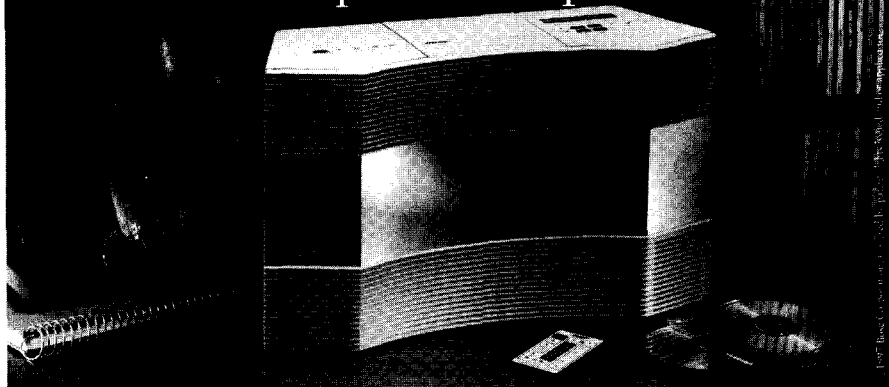
Even without these dangers, the hazards of no-limits diving are drastic. Ferreras, in his most recent world-record attempt, off Cabo San Lucas, at the southern tip of Mexico's Baja Peninsula, successfully descended to and returned from 436 feet. But he had to abort a first attempt, because he drifted into shallow water. Effectively blind without a mask, he raced toward a rocky bottom. Safety divers had to get him off the sled to avoid a crash. Only a few weeks earlier one of Ferreras's safety scuba divers had been found floating dead on the surface. During a training dive he may have had convulsions and therefore returned too quickly to the surface; internal gases, expanding as water pressure decreased, caused the arteries in his organs to explode.

Because of the dangers, dive organizations refuse to sanction no-limits diving. In 1970 CMAS stopped ratifying records, saying that no-limits diving was not a sport but a brand of "applied experimentation," meaning experiments involving people. Many aficionados of free diving are unimpressed with Ferreras and his ilk. Constant-weight has much more finesse, they say. Jacques Mayol's son, Jean-Jacques, who now teaches free diving in Miami, says of no-limits diving, "It's turned into a circus. Anybody who can clear his ears and hold his breath for two minutes can set a no-limits record. It doesn't take a whole lot of skill to hang on to something. But constant-weight I truly admire. They train until every little cell knows how to hold its breath."

WHEN Ravelo stops kicking at fifty feet, he orders his body to sleep for the rest of the ride. Down is the easy part. Everything is on his side. His body is saturated with fresh oxygen and depleted of carbon dioxide—it is an excess of the latter, not a shortage of the former, that causes the craving to breathe.

Somewhere in the primordial part of his mind the pressure and cold water trigger orders to conserve the oxygen supply in his bloodstream. His spleen shrinks substantially, raising the level of oxygen-enriched hemoglobin. Because blood shift takes blood from the limbs, the burning of oxygen is much reduced—only the brain and vital organs are drawing it. Receptor cells around Ravelo's lips cue the slowing of his heart

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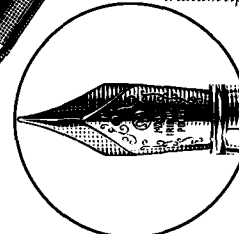
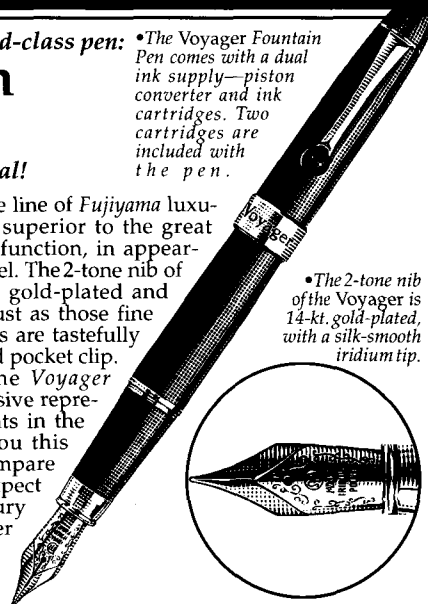
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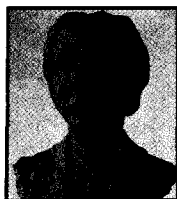
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by as much as 50 percent—a phenomenon, known as diving bradycardia, that sometimes allows near-drowning victims to be revitalized forty minutes after sinking into icy water.

Certainly the human body has ways to survive this sort of maneuver—as free divers argue when they are criticized for going where they do not belong. If we are not meant to descend into deep water, they ask, why are our bodies adapted to it?

Yet Ravelo's maneuver remains risky. The blood shift has reduced oxygen circulating to Ravelo's legs, which must power his return to the surface. Muscular exertion without oxygen is common; the muscles of a champion running a hundred-yard dash operate anaerobically, taking chemical energy from stores within themselves. But Ravelo's anaerobic strength may run out before he hits the surface.

The stopwatch ticks off the hundred and twentieth second; the entire dive is expected to last no more than 135 seconds. Two breath-hold safety divers descend to monitor Ravelo during the last, most dangerous, forty feet to the surface. This is the nether region between conquest and death, where the success shimmering at the surface can yet be snatched away by shallow-water blackout. The two breath-hold divers, unencumbered by equipment or considerations of decompression, can rush Ravelo to the surface if his body goes limp.

They have been below for thirty seconds; the stopwatch has ticked fifteen times since Ravelo was due on the surface—an eternity in a realm where contingencies are planned to the second. Their finned forms shoot around like huge, nervous baitfish. They know that the current, blown up by recent windstorms, has caught Ravelo off guard. Only later, when the scuba divers return to the surface, will they learn the full extent of the drama. Ravelo achieved his depth but drifted sixty feet from the guide rope. Disoriented, struggling against the current, he grabbed at a video-camera light instead of the reflector to which his confirmation tag was fixed. "When he realized his mistake," his manager said afterward, "he tried to go deeper, thinking he had farther to go." Another twenty seconds was lost while he wrestled with the cameraman. "I thought he would

take my spare air supply and breathe," his manager continued, "but he went for the tag and started his ascent."

By the time the divers spot Ravelo, his legs are powerless. Sinking, he desperately claws for the surface with his arms. Then he goes limp.

Two minutes and forty-three seconds. The safety divers burst to the surface with Ravelo's motionless form between them. "Breathe!" they shout. "Breathe!" With all their might they slap their friend's face. His limp floating body is as blue and dark as the ocean. The speedboat roars over and a medic has an oxygen mask over Ravelo's face before his fins are out of the water. No one cares that the record attempt has failed.

Bobbing in another swell, Meghan Heaney-Grier looks at something in her hands. It is the confirmation tag, which she found floating on the surface.

A FEW days after he returns from the hospital, Ravelo sits comfortably in a friend's living room, planning the next attempt. He is not intimidated by the blackout he suffered: he "pinked up" right after the mask was put on his face; the blood he vomited was only seepage from burst capillaries in his sinuses. He's had that before. "What we've learned," he says through his manager, who interprets, "is that we have to be where the seas are calm. We may go to the Caribbean or the Mediterranean. A record of this nature can be attempted only in perfect conditions."

Nor is Ravelo discouraged. He claims that Mayol has aborted many of his dives in panic, and so has Ferreras. He must go forward. Now, he feels, he has an advantage: he reached the depth.

But has he not learned something about tempting fate? Is he not worried that he has gone too far?

Ravelo shrugs. "Even the fish were uncomfortable in the sea that day," he says. Then, more thoughtfully, in his rapid-fire Spanish, he tells of the most painful time of his life. It was in 1994, when he was interred for a year at Guantanamo, the U.S. military base on the island of Cuba, where refugees were processed before they could come to America. "Every day I could see the sea but I could not go to it." He craved the sensations of a deep dive. The ocean has become, after all, his second home. ☼

Abortion in American History

The year after abortion was legalized in New York State, the maternal-mortality rate there dropped by 45 percent—one reason why legalization can be seen as “a public-health triumph”

by Katha Pollitt

WHEN ABORTION WAS A CRIME:

Women, Medicine, and Law in the United States, 1867–1973

by Leslie J. Reagan.
University of California Press,
387 pages, \$29.95.

OF all the issues roiling the ongoing culture wars, abortion is both the most intimate and the most common. Almost half of American women have terminated at least one pregnancy, and millions more Americans of both sexes have helped them, as partners, parents, health-care workers, counselors, friends. Collectively, it would seem, Americans have quite a bit of knowledge and experience of abortion. Yet the debate over legal abortion is curiously abstract: we might be discussing brain transplants. My files are crammed with articles assessing the question of when human life begins, the personhood of the fetus and its putative moral and legal status, and acceptable versus deplorable motives for terminating a pregnancy and the philosophical groundings of each one—not to mention the interests of the state, the medical profession, assorted religions, the taxpayer, the infertile, the fetal father, and even the fetal grandparent. Farfetched analogies abound:

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abortion is like the Holocaust, or slavery; denial of abortion is like forcing a person to spend nine months intravenously hooked up to a medically endangered stranger who happens to be a famous violinist. It sometimes seems that the further abortion is removed from the actual lives and circumstances of real girls and women, the more interesting it becomes to talk about. The famous-violinist scenario, the invention of the philosopher Judith Jarvis Thomson, has probably inspired as much commentary as any philosophical metaphor since Plato's cave.

Abortion as philosophical puzzle and moral conundrum is all very well, but what about abortion as a real-life social practice? Since the abortion debate is, theoretically at least, aimed at shaping social policy, isn't it important to look at abortion empirically and historically? Opponents often argue as if the widespread use of abortion were a modern innovation, the consequence of some aspect of contemporary life of which they disapprove (feminism, promiscuity, consumerism, Godlessness, permissiveness, individualism), and as if making it illegal would make it go away. What if none of this is true? In *When Abortion Was a Crime*, Leslie J. Reagan demonstrates that abortion has been a common procedure—"part of life"—in America since the eighteenth century, both during the slightly more than half of our history as a nation when it has been legal and during the slightly less than half when it was not. Important and original, vigorously written even down to the footnotes, *When Abortion Was a Crime* manages with apparent ease to combine serious scholarship (it won a President's Book Award from the Social Science History Association) and broad appeal to the general reader.

Some of the story of illegal abortion has been told by other historians: Linda Gordon, Rickie Solinger, James C. Mohr. But Reagan, who is an assistant professor of history, medicine, and women's studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, is the first to span the whole period of criminalization and to cover the subject in such depth. Moving skillfully between a nationwide perspective and a detailed study of Chicago, Reagan draws on a wide variety of primary documents, many never before ex-

amined. Using patient records, transcripts of trials and inquests into abortion-related deaths, medical-society proceedings, and reports in the popular press, she reconstructs the complex, shifting network of arrangements and understandings that enabled illegal abortion to persist, and sometimes even to flourish, for more than a hundred years. In doing so she not only brilliantly illuminates a hitherto shadowy aspect of American life but also raises crucial questions about the relationship between official mores and the values by which people—including the promulgators of those official mores—make the decisions that shape their lives.

UNTIL the last third of the nineteenth century, when it was criminalized state by state across the land, abortion was legal before "quickening" (approximately the fourth month of pregnancy). Colonial home medical guides gave recipes for "bringing on the menses" with herbs that could be grown in one's garden or easily found in the woods. By the mid eighteenth century commercial preparations were so widely available that they had inspired their own euphemism ("taking the trade"). Unfortunately, these drugs were often fatal. The first statutes regulating abortion, passed in the 1820s and 1830s, were actually poison-control laws: the sale of commercial abortifacients was banned, but abortion per se was not. The laws made little difference. By the 1840s the abortion business—including the sale of illegal drugs, which were widely advertised in the popular press—was booming. The most famous practitioner, Madame Restell, openly provided abortion services for thirty-five years, with offices in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia and traveling salespeople touting her "Female Monthly Pills."

In one of the many curious twists that mark the history of abortion, the campaign to criminalize it was waged by the same professional group that, a century later, would play an important role in legalization: physicians. The American Medical Association's crusade against abortion was partly a professional move, to establish the supremacy of "regular" physicians over midwives and homeopaths. More broadly, anti-abortion sentiment was connected to nativism, anti-

Catholicism, and, as it is today, anti-feminism. Immigration, especially by Catholics and nonwhites, was increasing, while birth rates among white native-born Protestants were declining. (Unlike the typical abortion patient of today, that of the nineteenth century was a middle- or upper-class white married woman.) Would the West "be filled by our own children or by those of aliens?" the physician and anti-abortion leader Horatio R. Storer asked in 1868. "This is a question our women must answer; upon their loins depends the future destiny of the nation." (It should be mentioned that the nineteenth-century women's movement also opposed abortion, having pinned its hopes on "voluntary motherhood"—the right of wives to control the frequency and timing of sex with their husbands.)

Nonetheless, having achieved their legal goal, many doctors—including prominent members of the AMA—went right on providing abortions. Some late-nineteenth-century observers estimated that two million were performed annually (which would mean that in Victorian America the number of abortions per capita was seven or eight times as high as it is today). Reagan argues persuasively that our image of nineteenth-century medicine is too monolithically hierarchical: while medical journals inveighed against abortion (and contraception), women were often able to make doctors listen to their needs and even lower their fees. And because, in the era before the widespread use of hospitals, women chose the doctors who would attend their whole families through many lucrative illnesses, medical men had self-interest as well as compassion for a motive. Thus in an 1888 exposé undercover reporters for the *Chicago Times* obtained an abortion referral from no less a personage than the head of the Chicago Medical Society. (He claimed he was conducting his own investigation.) Unless a woman died, doctors were rarely arrested and even more rarely convicted. Even midwives—whom doctors continued to try to drive out of business by portraying them, unfairly, as dangerous abortion quacks—practiced largely unmolested.

What was the point, then, of making abortion a crime? Reagan argues that its main effect was to expose and humiliate women caught in raids on abortion clinics or brought to the hospital with abor-

tion complications, and thereby send a message to all women about the possible consequences of flouting official gender norms. Publicity—the forced disclosure of sexual secrets before the authorities—was itself the punishment. Reagan's discussion of "dying declarations" makes particularly chilling reading: because the words of the dying are legally admissible in court, women on their deathbeds were informed by police or doctors of their imminent demise and harassed until they admitted to their abortions and named the people connected with them—including, if the woman was unwed, the man responsible for the pregnancy, who could be arrested and even sent to prison. In 1902 the editors of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* endorsed the by then common policy of denying a woman suffering from abortion complications medical care until she "confessed"—a practice that, Reagan shows, kept women from seeking timely treatment, sometimes with fatal results. In the late 1920s some 15,000 women a year died from abortions.

This state of affairs—widespread availability punctuated by law-enforcement crackdowns, popular-press scandals, and fitful attempts at medical self-policing—persisted for decades. Unsurprisingly, the Depression, during which women stood to lose their jobs if they married or had a child, saw a big surge in the abortion rate. Reagan describes clinics complete with doctors, nurses, receptionists, and printed instructions detailing follow-up care, and "birth-control clubs," whose members would pay regularly into a collective fund and draw abortion fees from it as needed. It was only in the 1940s and 1950s that organized medicine and the law combined to force these long-standing operations out of business and to disrupt the networks of communication by which women had found their way to them. Our popular image of illegal abortion as hard to find, extremely dangerous, sordid, and expensive dates from this period, as do the notorious "abortion wards" filled with women suffering from botched operations and attempts at self-abortion (always the most dangerous method). Well-connected white women with private health insurance were sometimes able to obtain "therapeutic" abortions, a never-defined category that remained legal throughout the epoch of illegal abortion.

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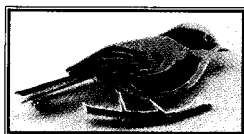
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But these were rare, and almost never available to nonwhite or poor women. Even for the privileged, though, access to safe abortion narrowed throughout the fifties, as doctors, fearful of being prosecuted in a repressive political climate for interpreting "therapeutic abortion" too broadly, set up hospital committees to rule on abortion requests. Some committees were more compassionate than others: at Mount Sinai, in New York, suicide attempts were considered an appropriate indication; at other hospitals they were ignored. In one instance of particular callousness, when a teenager tried to kill herself after her request was turned down, the committee decided to hospitalize her for the rest of her pregnancy. (She eventually got her abortion, after her multiple suicide attempts proved too disruptive for the staff.)

The conventional wisdom today considers *Roe v. Wade* to be an avant-garde decision, "judicial activism" at either its enlightened best or its high-handed worst. Reagan places the decision in its historical context, showing that it was a logical response to the times. By the sixties the whole jerry-built structure of criminalization was crumbling, along with the ideology of gender and sexuality that lay behind it. Moderate reforms had already been tried: twelve states permitted abortion in instances of rape, incest, danger to physical or mental health, or fetal defect, but since most women, as always, sought abortions for economic, social, or personal reasons, illegal abortion continued to thrive (something to consider for those who advocate once again restricting legal abortion in this way). When New York State decriminalized abortion in 1970 and thousands of well-off women started traveling there to obtain safe abortions while their disadvantaged sisters continued to risk death at home, the inherent unfairness of a legal patchwork was thrown into bold relief (something to ponder for those who want to throw the issue "back to the states"). Far from foisting a radical departure on an unready nation, the Supreme Court was responding to a decade-long buildup of popular sentiment for change. The movement was spearheaded by doctors who saw firsthand the carnage created by illegal abortion (more than 5,000 deaths a year, mostly of black and Hispanic women), and whose hands were now firmly

tied by the hospital committees they themselves had created. They were joined by civil-liberties lawyers, who brought to their briefs a keen understanding of criminalization's discriminatory effects; and by grassroots activists in the reborn women's movement, who by the end of the 1960s were resisting the law, forming such groups as the Society for Humane Abortion, in California, which denounced restrictions as insulting and humiliating to women, and Jane, in Chicago, which began as an abortion-referral service and ended by training its members to perform abortions themselves.

LEGALIZING abortion was a public-health triumph that for pregnant women ranked with the advent of antiseptics and antibiotics. In 1971, the year after decriminalization, the maternal-mortality rate in New York State dropped 45 percent. Today, however, the inequality of access that helped to bring illegality to an end is once again on the increase. More than 80 percent of U.S. counties have no abortion providers, and some whole states have only one or two. The Supreme Court has allowed states to erect barriers to abortion—denial of public funds for poor women's abortions, parental consent and notification requirements, mandatory delays, "counseling sessions." Anti-abortion zealots have committed arson, assault, and murder in their campaign against abortion clinics. A new generation of doctors, who have never seen a woman die from a septic abortion or been haunted by the suicide of a patient denied help, are increasingly reluctant to terminate pregnancies. Only 12 percent of medical schools teach first-trimester abortion as a routine aspect of gynecology. If Reagan is right to correlate anti-abortion activity with periods of high anxiety about feminism and radicalism generally, none of this should come as a surprise. She closes on an ominous note, sketching the possibility of a United States in which not only is abortion once again a crime but anti-abortion fanaticism brings on a Romania-style fetal-police state, complete with government-monitored pregnancies and police investigations of miscarriages.

I came away from the book more sanguine. One of Reagan's noteworthy findings, after all, is that the views of the American people about abortion have re-

mained rather stable over two centuries. Attitudes toward early abortions—in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries those before quickening, today those in the first trimester—have always been much more permissive and matter-of-fact than attitudes toward later abortions, just as losing a pregnancy after one or two missed periods, however distressing to a woman who wants to bear a child, has always been seen as a smaller event than miscarrying at six months. Little in the American popular tradition resonates with the “pro-life” doctrine that condemns all abortions alike on the grounds that a fertilized egg is already a baby. Far from being a weird judicial concoction, as its opponents argue, *Roe v. Wade*’s trimester system, which gradually extends the right of states to regulate and even ban most abortions as the fetus develops, reflects this folk understanding rather well. Similarly, the general lack of enthusiasm for prosecuting those who perform abortions and the almost total failure to prosecute and jail women for having them suggest that whatever Americans may consider abortion to be, it isn’t baby killing, a crime our courts have always punished quite severely.

When *Abortion Was a Crime* is rich, thought-provoking, and revelatory on many levels, not least as a triumphant vindication of the somewhat contested disciplines of women’s history and social history “from the bottom up.” Perhaps its greatest achievement, though, is in a way its simplest: it puts abortion back into the context in which it actually occurs—the lives of obscure and ordinary women. If the abortion debate were really about abortion, Reagan’s work would consign many of its terms to the scrap heap: it seems absurd to suggest that the overburdened mothers, desperate young girls, and precariously employed working women who populate these pages risked public humiliation, injury, and death for mere “convenience,” much less out of “secular humanism” or a Lockean notion of property rights in their bodies. It’s even more preposterous—not to mention insulting—to see them as standing in relation to their fetuses as a slaveowner to a slave or a Nazi to a Jew.

Reagan suggests that the abortion debate is really an ideological struggle over the position of women. How free should they be to have sexual experiences, in or

out of marriage, without paying the price of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood? How much right should they have to consult their own needs, interests, and well-being with respect to childbearing or anything else? How subordinate should they be to men, how deeply embedded in the family, how firmly controlled by national or racial objectives? If she is right, and I think she is, a work of history is not going to make much of a dent in the certainties of those who would like to see abortion once again made a crime. The people who need this book the most won’t read it. Everyone else, though, will find it enlightening. ☼

The Crisis of Electoral Politics

by Martin P. Wattenberg

THE NEW AMERICAN VOTER

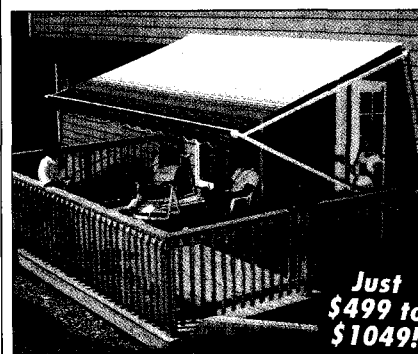
by Warren E. Miller and
J. Merrill Shanks.

Harvard University Press,
640 pages, \$45.00 hardcover/
\$19.95 paperback.

THE publication of the classic work *The American Voter*, in 1960, led many to question whether Americans were living up to democratic theory’s expectations of a well-informed and active electorate. The critical findings of this first in-depth examination of national survey data were startling, especially in light of indicators that contentment with politics was widespread at the time. Back then three quarters of the public trusted the government to do what was right all or most of the time, people were generally satisfied with the party system, and the national turnout rate was at its highest since 1908.

If the message of *The American Voter* was that not all was well with American democracy, *The New American Voter* bears the opposite message. Warren E.

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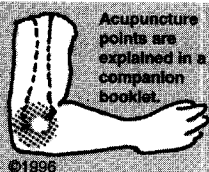
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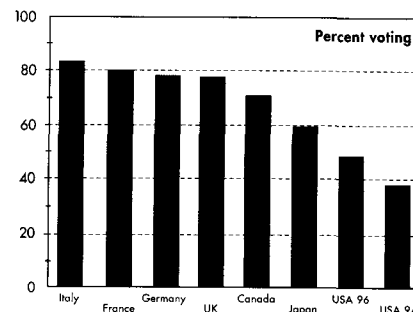
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Miller (one of the authors of the original work) and J. Merrill Shanks have produced a three-part book that provides an analysis of declining turnout rates, an examination of changing patterns of party identification, and a comprehensive model of voting behavior, which they apply to the 1992 election. After 500 pages of analysis of survey data the authors complacently conclude that "nothing we have learned suggests that the basic institutions in our system of choosing a president are in need of repair, other than that which can be provided by wise and effective leaders." Many observers of the 1996 presidential campaign might wonder whether they were looking at the same country as Miller and Shanks.

Once again in 1996 the turnout rate of Americans was nothing for our leaders to brag about at G7 meetings. As Miller and Shanks rightly point out, the first decision citizens must make on Election Day is whether or not to go to the polls. Here's how our turnout rates in 1996 and 1994 compare with those for recent elections in the other G7 countries:



Over the past several decades no other G7 country has ever had a turnout in an election for its lower legislative house as low as our 49 percent turnout in 1996, let alone the abysmal 39 percent in 1994. And if this weren't embarrassing enough, newly emerging democracies have surpassed our turnout rates. Recent presidential elections in Taiwan, Russia, and Poland produced turnouts of 76, 69, and 67 percent respectively. Millions of South Africans stood in line for hours to vote in their country's first election open to all races, in which 87 percent of the eligible electorate took part. Of course, after the initial enthusiasm for democracy wears off, turnout should fall somewhat in these new democracies. Such a pattern has occurred in the former Soviet satellites, but their turnout rates have remained high in comparison to ours.

Americans once had a reasonable excuse for relatively low turnout rates: the aftermath of the Civil War. For more than a century the states of the old Confederacy were a major drag on the nation's turnout rate, owing to racial discrimination, the poll tax, and lack of party competition. In the contest between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon only 40 percent of adults in those southern states voted, whereas the turnout in the rest of the nation was a respectable 70 percent. By 1996 turnout had risen in the states of the former Confederacy to 46 percent, but had fallen in the rest of the country to 50 percent.

Some analysts have interpreted this precipitous drop outside the South as reflecting growing alienation, and thus widespread disengagement, from government. Miller and Shanks take issue with this view. Focusing on generational patterns in turnout from 1960 to 1988, they find that whereas those who were of voting age by 1964 maintained consistently high levels of turnout, Baby Boomers and post-Boomers have voted at lower rates. Inquiring minds will naturally want to know what has kept the post-Second World War generations from going to the polls. Miller and Shanks fail to find any answers to this key question in the survey data. They simply surmise that the turmoil of the 1960s and afterward must have discouraged many of these citizens from getting into the voting habit.

Though the authors stress the importance of common generational experiences, they neglect the one factor that most altered socialization for these younger generations: the introduction of television. A regular scholarly finding is that people acquire less information about politics from television than from newspapers and talking to others. TV's fast-paced and superficial view of the political world has led to a generation of voters who are underinformed about politics. For example, a Gallup poll in June of last year found that 75 percent of people born after the Second World War could identify the host of *The Tonight Show*, but only 50 percent could name the current speaker of the House—the most visible in recent memory.

Miller and Shanks write that asking why the politically uninterested don't vote is like asking "why those who have

never heard an opera don't sing operatic arias." But comparisons of survey data from around the world show that Americans actually report relatively high levels of interest in politics. So why do people in other countries vote more often? Walter Dean Burnham, a noted elections analyst, has long argued that socialist parties elsewhere mobilize the working classes in a manner unknown in the American environment of competition between two middle-class parties. There is clearly some truth to this—but even as leftist parties like the British Labour and the German SPD have moved away from class-based appeals, turnout has remained relatively high. Other fundamental differences between politics in the United States and in the other G7 countries must be at the root of the American phenomenon of low turnout. One such factor is the overwhelming range of offices and referenda about which Americans must make decisions. In the most recent election, for example, I was asked to make thirty-six marks on my California ballot. Other countries may have many parties to choose from, but their citizens have to make only one or two choices on Election Day. Surely it is not coincidental that the only established democracy with turnout rates as low as ours—Switzerland—has also inundated its citizens with voting opportunities. Build a user-friendly electoral system and voters will come; build a complex system and they'll stay away. The recent "Motor Voter" Act and other reforms may have made it easier to register, but voter turnout remains low because America's political system is non-user-friendly. (For more on this aspect of American politics see "Running Scared," by Anthony King, in the January *Atlantic*.)

Ever since the publication of *The American Voter* scholars have looked to party identification as the major means for making the voting process user-friendly. As Miller and Shanks observe, one role of party affiliation is to provide a framework for understanding the political world. Therefore many observers have bemoaned the recent decline of party identification, fearing that voters are being set adrift in a sea of political volatility. Miller and Shanks believe that such fears are overblown. Again, the crux of their critique is a generational analysis. They find that people born before the Second

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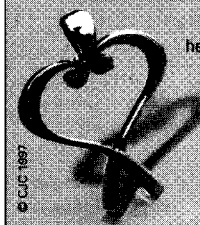


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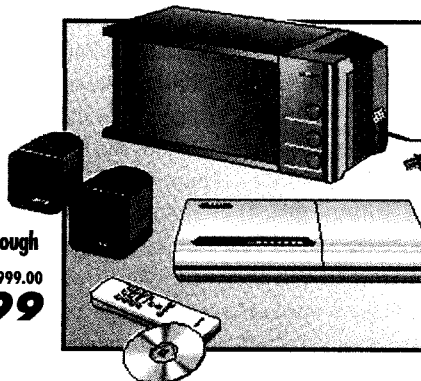


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Treasure Map

Each of four squares is forced to share two letters; these letter pairs are the compass points SE, SW, NW, and NE. Following the directions they indicate spells out "BELOW HORSESHOE." Below the diagram's only "U" is the treasure: PYRITE (fool's gold). Across. 1. S(T)EA + L 4. ORGAN + D(r)Y 8. C(I)USTER 9. CAN + OED (Doe anag.) 11. APPRAI(S)ERS (IRS appear anag.) 13. LYRES (homophone) 14. A + B(H)ORS 15. PR + I + SON'S 18. L + ENIN (rev.) 19. WIT + HIT 23. (s)ELLER + Y 24. RETRO (hidden) 25. D(ROSE)R + A 27. NEA + TEST 29. CAP + ON 30. S(CHOO)LING 31. SE(R + MO)N 32. ORANG + E 33. I(RON + WEE)D 34. (a)NIGER (rev.) Down. 1. SCAL(e) + P 2. E + SPRITS 3. LEAS(t) 4. OR(I)EN + TED (Det. Nero rev.) 5. GA(R)BLE 6. NO-NO (rev.) 7. DE(B) + RIS (sir Ed rev.) 10. DI + SNEY (rev.) 12. S(HELL)S 16. SH + ARES 17. SHE(R + WOO)D 19. WA(RN + E)RS 20. S(WEEP)ING 21. T + EASE + R 22. ROS(CO)E 26. (h)ANGER 28. TYRO (hidden) 29. CO(R)N

World War have not rejected partisan labels at all. But new voters are more likely than voters of previous generations to call themselves Independents.

However, just because older voters have retained their partisan labels doesn't necessarily mean that such labels continue to be important. Miller and Shanks draw an analogy between party identification and religion: both often have origins in the family and are learned early in life. But just as people who stop attending religious services usually still call themselves members of a particular faith, many Democrats and Republicans have kept these labels long after their meaning has withered. My favorite piece of evidence concerning the current lack of relevance of political parties comes from a set of open-ended questions about them, which are regularly asked in the National Election Study, conducted biennially at the University of Michigan. In both 1992 and 1994, three out of ten people responded as follows:

Q. Is there anything in particular that you like about the Democratic Party?
A. No.

Q. Is there anything in particular that you dislike about the Democratic Party?
A. No.

Q. Is there anything in particular that you like about the Republican Party?
A. No.

Q. Is there anything in particular that you dislike about the Republican Party?
A. No.

When these questions were first asked, in the 1952 election study, only one out of ten people interviewed responded in this fashion. Back then people who felt this way about the parties had little to say about the candidates either, and few of them voted. Today people who have tuned out the parties are frequently well versed in the candidates and the issues. Many observers consider these people to be the most important group in American electoral politics—the floating voters.

Miller and Shanks try to lay to rest any concern that the pool of floating voters is increasing. Their best evidence is that party identification was more strongly related to the presidential vote

in the 1980s than in previous decades. However, they ignore powerful counter-evidence by ending this part of their analysis with 1988 and focusing solely on the votes for one office.

IN the hundred years from 1864 to 1964 there were only three elections in which the presidential candidate of a minor party received more than five percent of the vote. Since then this threshold has been exceeded by George Wallace, John Anderson, and Ross Perot. Recently, for the first time ever, a third-party candidate—Perot—garnered more than five percent in two consecutive elections: 19 percent in 1992 and eight percent in 1996.

Another historically unprecedented facet of recent American elections is the split decisions they have regularly yielded. Historians typically identify political eras according to the dominant party of the times. The Republican Party of Abraham Lincoln was the dominant party in national elections over the three decades after the Civil War. Then William McKinley's brand of pro-business Republicanism was ascendant for nearly forty years. A Democratic era followed in which New Deal policies were in favor. But since the election of 1968 neither party has really been in control, because Presidents have typically been faced with opposition majorities in Congress. Computing presidential batting averages based on success in achieving partisan majorities in the House and the Senate yields the following numbers for each historical period:

	<u>House</u>	<u>Senate</u>
The Era of Divided Government		
1969–present	.200	.400
The New Deal & the Great Society		
1933–1968	.778	.778
McKinley Republicanism		
1897–1932	.778	.944
Lincoln Republicanism		
1861–1896	.667	.722

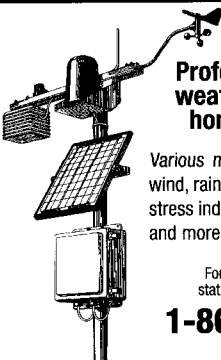
If batting averages had fallen so dramatically in baseball, there would be an uproar demanding something to restore the historical balance between hitters

and pitchers. In American politics something does need to be done to restore the electoral link between the President and Congress. The situation that Bill Clinton faces in his second term, with the opposition party controlling the House and Senate, is now the norm rather than the exception. In 1996 many voters again split their tickets. For example, in Maine, Clinton garnered 21 percent more of the vote than Bob Dole, while Susan Collins—who disavowed Dole's tax-cut plan—won a Senate seat for the Republicans. At the opposite end of Interstate 95 Clinton won Florida but the Republicans won fifteen of the state's twenty-three seats in the House. Such results have become increasingly common in an electorate in which 71 percent of voters say they usually split their tickets and 92 percent say they vote for the person, not the party. If you wonder why American government often seems paralyzed (see "The Uncertain Leviathan," by Jonathan Schell, in the August, 1996, *Atlantic*), one major reason is that ticket-splitting often gives us a President without much clout in Congress.

PERHAPS the best way to evaluate this book, which was published on the eve of the 1996 presidential election, is to see how well it helps us to understand recent voting behavior. Miller and Shanks say in their conclusion that "it seems reasonable to expect voting turnout to continue to rise." Instead the decline in turnout from 1992 to 1996 was the largest since the Second World War. Rather than taking the authors' advice not to worry about turnout rates, political observers will probably be devoting much discussion over the next four years to why the majority of Americans are not voting.

The one aspect of the party system that Miller and Shanks single out for future investigation also seems off target in light of recent results. They make much of the fact that through the 1980s Democrats had lower loyalty rates at the polls than Republicans—especially in the South. "The explanation for Democratic variation and Republican constancy should rank high on electoral researchers' agenda for future research," they write. However, in both 1992 and 1996 Democratic identifiers were more loyal to their presidential nominee than

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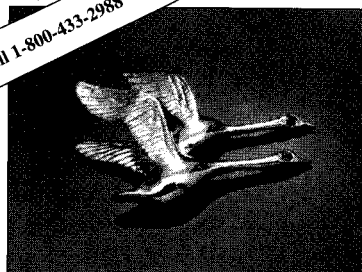
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Republicans were. Also contrary to Miller and Shanks's earlier findings, 1996 exit polls revealed no significant difference in defection rates between northern and southern Democrats. Rather, a regional split can now be found in the Republican Party. Southern Republicans were seven percent more likely to vote for Dole than Republicans outside the South. The tough task facing the Republican Party is how to get supporters of Christine Todd Whitman, Pete Wilson, George Pataki, and the like to unite behind a presidential nominee about whom supporters of Jesse Helms and Phil Gramm will be enthusiastic as well. Given the predominance of southern conservatives in the Republican congressional leadership, and the great influence of the new Christian right in Republican primaries, this is likely to be a substantial obstacle to the party's hopes of regaining the White House.

In contrast, Republican congressional prospects look better than they have in at least forty years. The party is almost certain to gain House seats in 1998, giv-

en the historical pattern in which the President's party has lost seats in every off-year election since 1934. And it is hard to see how the Democratic senators who were elected in 1992 can do as well in the unfavorable midterm environment they are likely to face in 1998. The prospects are therefore good that the Republican Party will enter the election of 2000 with a substantially stronger hold on Congress than it enjoyed in 1996—one that even a Democratic presidential landslide might not be able to overcome. In sum, the era of divided government is likely to be with us for some time.

If one is satisfied with elections in which the majority of the population stays home and those who go to the polls rarely confer power on either party, then the conclusion of *The New American Voter* will ring true. For many others, though, this book will serve as a reminder that scholarly consensus has yet to be reached about the gravity of America's problems of declining turnout, a weakening party system, and the absence of mandates in elections. ☙

BRIEF REVIEWS



Deadly Feasts: Tracking the Secrets of a Terrifying New Plague

by Richard Rhodes.

Simon & Schuster, 259 pages,
\$24.00.

Scrapie is an old disease of sheep, long studied by veterinarians with no helpful results. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease was first observed in 1913, in Germany, and has remained an uncommon affliction of human beings. Kuru was discovered in New Guinea in the 1950s, among a people addicted to a particularly unsanitary form of cannibalism. Something called transmissible encephalopathy attacks mink when they are ranches. These are all degenerative

brain diseases and all are invariably fatal. Once scientists began fitting the far-flung evidence together, it appeared that these diseases were caused by various strains of the same basic agent, thought to be a slow-acting virus that has proved impervious to any known method of killing a virus. Mr. Rhodes's report of these scientific studies and the people who have conducted them is lively, very well written, thoroughly interesting, and frequently gruesome; it eventually arrives at bovine spongiform encephalopathy—mad cow disease. It is at this point that the book becomes truly alarming. The British government's initial attempt to brush the whole poisoned-beef problem out of sight (which included officially advising a woman

whose granddaughter was dying of the illness to "think about the Common Market" and keep quiet) delayed serious action; it has never progressed to effective action. According to Mr. Rhodes, mad cow disease is in a position to reach not only beef eaters but consumers of any other meat, including those in the United States, and this new disease is "an atrocity of destruction . . . drawn out horribly for months." The Black Death was merciful by comparison. This book is a serious warning from an accomplished scientific reporter, and should be read as such.

Very Bad Poetry

edited by Kathryn Petras
and Ross Petras.
Random House/Vintage,
144 pages, \$10.00.

Why should anyone deliberately read bad poetry? The editors consider their dreadful specimens funny. They must be easily amused.

Bogart

by A. M. Sperber and Eric Lax.
Morrow, 676 pages,
\$27.50.

The authors of this fine life of a fine actor have avoided both the idolatry and the denigration that so often disfigure Hollywood biographies. Bogart, of course, is an interesting subject regardless of his professional status. His background and education (in which he took little interest at the time) were such that, according to the critic Richard Schickel, he "should not have ended up being an actor in Hollywood." But he did, and once there, contributed to the early protests against anti-Communist hysteria and, more successfully, to action against the contract system by which studios virtually enslaved players. The book contains information about studio maneuvers, both financial and political, and about such colleagues as Katharine Hepburn and John Huston, all of it intriguing, some of it amazing (why did nobody ever think to shoot Jack Warner?), some of it laughable. A. M. Sperber worked for years on interviews and records and anything else she could find about Bogart. After her death, Mr. Lax put her material into final form. They both deserve gratitude.

You deserve a factual look at...

Those "West Bank" Settlements Are they really the "greatest obstacle to peace?"

In the context of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that have now been going on for almost three years, it is often asserted that the Israeli towns and villages (usually and with some derogation referred to as "settlements") in Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") are possibly the most serious obstacle to peace. That has been and is being repeated so often that many have come to accept it as truth.

What are the facts?

A recap of history. Some thumbnail history may be in order. Large numbers of Jews have been living in these territories since biblical times. Most of the Arabs living there are in fact relative newcomers. "Palestine" is the entire area now covered by Israel including Judea/Samaria (the so-called "West Bank") and what is now the Kingdom of Jordan. It originally also included the Golan Heights, which later, in an agreement between England and France, were ceded to France, and to Syria as the successor in possession.

In 1922, contrary to the Mandate of the League of Nations, the British severed the entire area east of the Jordan and gave it to the Hashemite Arabs for their assistance in World War I. Thus, fully 75% of Palestine, all of which under the Mandate and under the terms of the Balfour Declaration was meant to be a home for the Jewish people, was lost for that purpose. Only the area west of the Jordan River was left for the Jewish settlement.

How the West Bank became "Arab country." In 1947, after decades of strife between Arabs and Jews, the British decided to relinquish the Mandate. The UN stepped in and proposed a partition plan under which the country (west of the River) was to be divided into respective Arab and Jewish areas. Jerusalem was to be internationalized. The Jews accepted the plan; the Arabs refused it out of hand. In 1948, on the twice truncated territory

allotted to them by the U.N., the Jews declared their independence and the state of Israel was born. On the same day, six Arab armies invaded the new-born state. In what can be described as an almost biblical miracle, the Jews defeated them. When an armistice was finally secured, however, TransJordan remained in possession of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem; Egypt remained in possession of the Gaza Strip. TransJordan renamed itself Jordan.

The Six-Day War. Once in possession of the "West Bank" and East Jerusalem, the Jordanians promptly

"Why should the Arab countries and the 'West Bank' be the only places in the world where Jews are not allowed to live?"

ceeded to expel all Jews and systematically to desecrate and to destroy most Jewish sacred places, cemeteries and houses of worship. No Jews,

regardless of citizenship were allowed into the "West Bank" or East Jerusalem, the locale of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism. In 1967, Egyptian president Abdel Nasser, joined by the same array of Arab armies that had unsuccessfully tried to destroy Israel at its birth in 1948, launched another war against Israel "to drive the Jews into the sea" and into oblivion, once and for all. But the Israelis utterly defeated the combined Arab might in the Six-Day War, one of the greatest military victories in history. When the dust of war settled, the Israelis had not only retained their national territory, but had repossessed the territories of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and had totally occupied Egypt's vast Sinai Peninsula.

It is clear from this abbreviated history that the Israeli claim to the "West Bank" is far stronger than that of the Arabs. About 200,000 Jews now live there. And why shouldn't they? Why should the Arab countries and the "West Bank" be the only places in the whole wide world where Jews are not allowed to live? How can 200,000 Jews living among one million Arabs be the "greatest threat to peace"? Why should anybody be concerned about a new settlement of a few mobile homes on some barren Judean hills as the "greatest threat to peace," when we seem to be oblivious and totally unconcerned about the unrelenting hostility of the Arab countries, the de facto incorporation of Lebanon by Syria, the Scuds and the chemical weapons still remaining in Iraq, and the relentless and ominous build-up of Syria's missile forces?

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Reality and Dreams

by Muriel Spark.

Houghton Mifflin, 160 pages, \$22.00.

The protagonist of Dame Muriel Spark's latest novel is Tom Richards. He is a distinguished maker of dreams—that is, movies—and his idea of reality is anything that interferes with the creation of his envisioned film. A great deal does interfere, beginning with his own fall off a crane. Insulated by his record of success and his wife's money (she is heiress to an American cookie empire), Tom forges ahead, converting his dream into the relative solidity of pictures. Meanwhile, the kind of reality that affects the three-dimensional world (love affairs, lost jobs, lunacy, and the like) proceeds as usual. The combination makes a wonderful novel. Dame Muriel's writing method is unique and irresistible. She assembles a group of characters who then appear to go their independent ways, uncontrolled by the author, who merely reports their doings with cool precision and a puckish satire so smoothly integrated into the action that it seems to arise spontaneously. There is a great deal of practical knowledge and subtle psychological understanding underlying her work, but the author never permits it to encumber the surface or slow the pace of this brilliant, concise novel.

Bonobo:

The Forgotten Ape

by Frans de Waal,

photographs by Frans Laning.

University of California,

202 pages, \$39.95.

Bonobo have been called, inaccurately, pigmy chimpanzees. They are chimpanzees, all right, but almost the reverse of their more familiar cousins. Professor de Waal, a distinguished primatologist, has observed them at length in several zoos and has combined his knowledge with that of observers in Zaire, where bonobo live in the wild. His book may offer more about bonobo than anyone but an ape enthusiast really wants to know, but for those who do want to know, it is a splendidly thorough, up-to-date report on an exceptional creature. What Professor de Waal describes is a society of mamma's boys, permanently subject to female control. It is also an erotic society,

with sexual contacts conducted steadily, ingeniously, and with no discernible concern for sex or age. One of Mr. Laning's many photographs sums up these apes rather well. It is of a male bonobo, standing straight as a palace sentry, well prepared for sexual action, and offering handfuls of sugarcane. Bonobo may lie at the root of civilized behavior.

Inventions of the March Hare

by T. S. Eliot,

edited by Christopher Ricks.

Harcourt Brace, 472 pages, \$30.00.

When Eliot sold a notebook containing miscellaneous early work to the collector John Quinn in 1922, he wrote, "You will find a great many sets of verse which have never been printed and which I am sure you will agree never ought to be printed . . . I beg you fervently to keep them to yourself and see that they never are printed." So much for an author's sensible intentions. Here they all are, the trial runs and the discards, immersed in a scholarly paraphernalia that runs all the way to the color of Eliot's ink. Appendix A, however, does offer significant information. It proves that comic dirty verse is a genre for which Eliot had no talent.

Master Drawings Rediscovered

by Tatiana Ilatovskaya.

Abrams, 224 pages, \$49.50.

Not exactly rediscovered. The Russians have known all along the whereabouts of these "Treasures From Prewar German Collections" and are now revealing what Yevgeny Sidorov, the Minister of Culture, describes as "these last prisoners of war." The assemblage includes Goya's late, blood-chilling depictions of misery, Rowlandson satires, an Ingres, a Delacroix, a fine group of Daumiers, Millet, Menzel, Cézanne, Van Gogh, and Toulouse-Lautrec from the nineteenth century; and from the twentieth Signac, Nolde, and Archipenko. The display is glorious, and the commentary is useful without becoming overwhelming. Altogether a welcome view of lost and now recovered beauty.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams



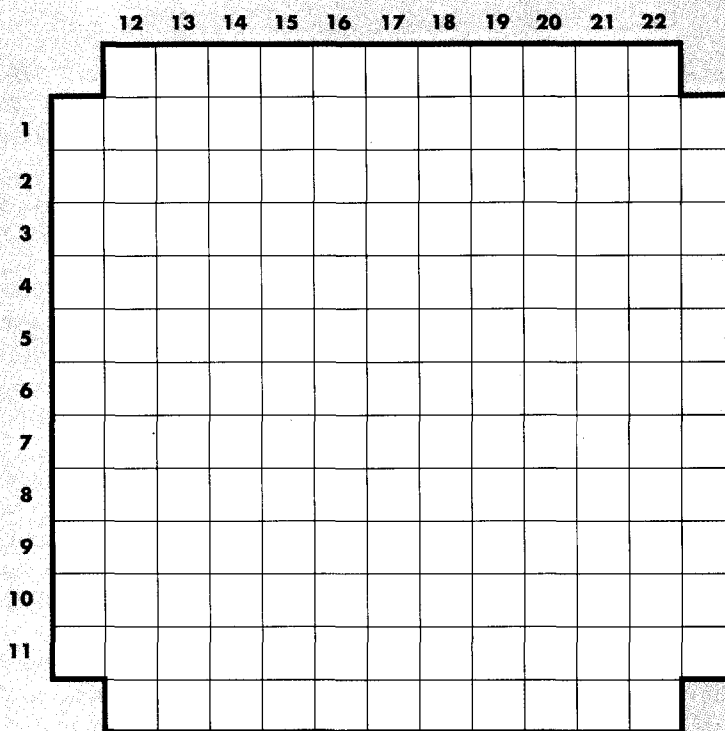
THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Slide Show

For your cryptic entertainment this month, we offer a Slide Show of . . . well, that's for you to find out. The clues for each row and column yield answers totaling 11 letters. Entries normally start and end within the unshaded central grid; however, some answers will fit only if they are slid intact so that the first or last letter projects into the shaded perimeter. Sliding an entry will leave a gap just before or after it; so in each row or column containing a "projector," one letter is supplied only by a crossing entry. When all the answers have been entered, the "projectors" in the shaded regions, reading clockwise from a spot to be determined, will show where our travels took us. Eight answers are capitalized.

The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 118.



Clues

1. Traveled by plane, and dictated passage (4)
Concentrated orange juice and piece of apple gulped back by famous horse (7)
2. Place to perform big hit of 1996 after the guy at the front leaves (5)
Irene gets stocks back out of a deal (6)
3. Security personnel not opening doors (7)
Cardinal is speaking no German (4)
4. Miserable condition after eating bit of rotten food (11)
5. Eliminate error after ages (5)
Mean streak is seen in tragic film with Peter Lorre (6)
6. Improves the goals of Dorothy's aunt? (6)
Good work unit's main obstacles? (5)
7. Spark visible to the audience (6)
African city falls behind, having nothing (5)
8. Utterly in confusion, with vermin biting in a predacious way (11)
9. Vigorous martyr of the Revolution (4)
Snack food commercial directed toward alcoholic on the rebound (7)
10. Fred's finale with cane, perhaps! (5)
Regarding this Spielberg movie, absorbed by larger-than-life character (6)
11. Repeat the aforementioned piece of trivia in party (5)
Overhauled Soviet unit (6)
12. Brother liberal embracing resistance (5)
Crazy, low-grade housing is put together the wrong way (6)
13. Talk-show host, on the subject of woman's name (6)
Fold coat at hearing (5)
14. Advanced religious observance (4)
Elderly one put in one very small change? (7)
15. Seen from behind, light yellow blemishes (5)
Terrible court conduct (6)
16. New York legislator with passion entering capital (6,5)
17. Fields are adjacent to a school (5)
Side excursion to lodges in Westward regretted (6)
18. Determined effort accepted by biblical judge with abandon (11)
19. Within certain limits, damage is done (6)
Played a recording with English tenor making a comeback (5)
20. Night-life city associated with Irish artist (6)
One run gained by a hot slugger (5)
21. Introduce former world leader (5)
Precious record set back study (6)
22. Dines out around noon in casual clothing (6)
Fifty parts fill agenda (5)

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD COURT

by Barbara Wallraff

Now that the Food and Drug Administration has imposed regulations concerning the use of the word *healthy*

in describing meat and poultry products, I suppose it spells the end of healthful. Apparently, healthy does not mean, as we might expect,

that the animal was fit and disease-free prior to slaughter; it means that the food product does not exceed certain fat, sodium, or cholesterol limits per serving. Healthful's demise was inevitable after both Barney and Cookie Monster extolled the virtues of "healthy food" on public television. Barney, being a tyrannosaur, may have used the word in its true meaning, however, for I doubt that he would enjoy eating, say, a leprous elk.

Daniel S. Blinn
Glastonbury, Conn.

I myself like to observe the distinction you make, on the grounds that where it is easy to denote a difference in meaning with different word forms, well, why not do it? All the same, *healthy* has been used in the sense of "conducive to good health" for some four centuries. In this it is no more protean than many other adjectives that no one complains about. Think of "*happy child*" and "*happy hour*," or "*harebrained person*" and "*harebrained scheme*," or "*heavenly host*" and "*heavenly hash*," or "*honest Abe*" and "*honest mistake*."

What rule on noun number applies when the possibilities become messy or even ludicrous, as in the following examples? "They turned their

heads to see us better." (How many heads does each have?) "Both men relied heavily on their wives." (Bigamists both?)

Martin Mitchell
New York, N.Y.

Some may find it obvious that if there's a plural subject and something to be paired with the individual entities making up that subject—usually, though not always, after a plural possessive pronoun ("They . . . their")—this other noun must be plural too: "They" all have heads, and so it must be "They turned their heads," and so on. But let's say a man has his pride, and a woman has her pride too. "They have their prides"? Surely not.

The general rules are these: When the noun in question describes an abstract or uncountable entity, like *pride* or *vitality*, it ought to be singular. Sometimes nouns that one may think of as concrete and countable will turn out to be abstract in context ("They taught *school*"; "They were held *hostage*"). When one is at pains to make clear that the individuals in the subject are to be paired one apiece with the persons, places, or things in question, the number of the noun can't be relied on to make the point, and other clues must be given ("Each of the bigamists relied heavily on his *wives*"). But it is usually either obvious or beside the point how many of the things are to be paired with the individuals in the subject, and then one needn't scruple to use

the plural ("Like lightning, the models changed their *dresses and stockings and shoes*, and, zipping their *zippers* and buttoning their *buttons*, bolted back to the runway"). This is the rule, it seems to me, that really applies to your *wives*—and

your *heads*. Whenever these rules seem to be suggesting a ridiculous wording ("The tenants refused to pay their *rents*"), don't follow them. It's rarely difficult to recast the sentence to avoid trouble ("The tenants refused to pay *rent*").

I just heard a presumably well-paid TV personality refer to himself as "*persona non gratis*." I thought it was very funny under the circumstances, but when he repeated it, I was embarrassed for him.

What should one do? If improper usage were crooked seams on stockings or spinach in the teeth of a lunchmate, a real friend would say something. If it

were a physical handicap, it would be too personal for a mere acquaintance to address. But what if it's a professional handicap? Is it worse to embarrass someone once or let them do it repeatedly for themselves?

J. Chanse
Oakland, Calif.

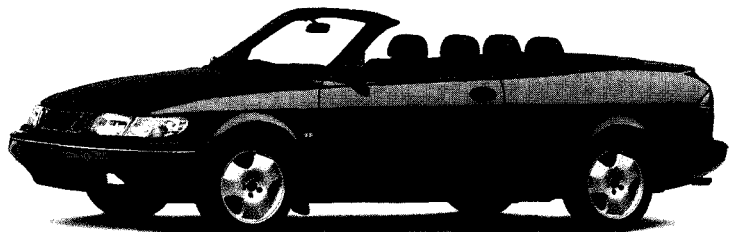
Someone who has already embarrassed himself will not thank you for pointing it out. And yet you might rather the other person at least heard the right form, and so had the chance to learn by example. The trick is to work it into what you have to say as if you hadn't noticed anything wrong with the other person's version. Maybe you should send your television personality a letter that says something like "I want you to know you're hardly *persona non grata* in this household!"

Have you recently had a language dispute that you would like this column to resolve? Write to Word Court in care of *The Atlantic Monthly*, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, MA 02114, or send E-mail to MsGrammar@TheAtlantic.com. All letters become the property of Word Court.



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